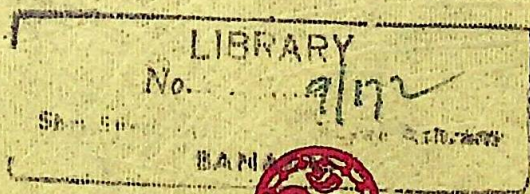


The Gist of Religions

[2nd Revised Edition]



Swami Narayanananda

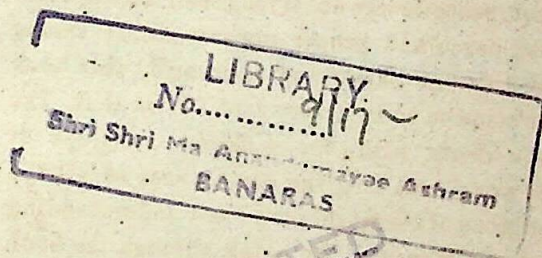
PUBLISHER'S NOTE

This book 'THE GIST OF RELIGIONS' is a very interesting book. When on one side atom and hydrogen bombs are threatening the whole humanity with total destruction, and on the other, peace-lovers are trying their best to establish peace and proper understanding among the different nations of the world, this book has come to us as a very rare Divine Gift. The book deals with the different religions of the world and it gives the essence of all the religions of the world for a clear understanding and ready grasp. By going through the book with an unbiased mind, it is sure to help the warring creeds to remove their prejudices and create the spirit of tolerance with one another. Besides this, this book will serve as a reference book also.

The revered author, Sri Swami Narayanandaji Maharaj requires no introduction. His already published books are considered to be master-pieces, as they have made substantial original contribution to Yoga, Psychology, Vedanta, Mind-Control, etc., and all of them have reached the different parts of the world and have helped great research-scholars, Yoga-students and spiritual aspirants beyond their expectation. The present book is the eleventh to come out from the pen of the revered Saint. We sincerely hope that this book will find a warm place among the Truth-seekers and peace lovers of the different nations of the world irrespective of caste, creed, sect and sex.

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by Sri Jagannath Roy Kundu
(Calcutta.)



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The Gist of Religions

[2nd Revised Edition]

By

SWAMI NARAYANANANDA



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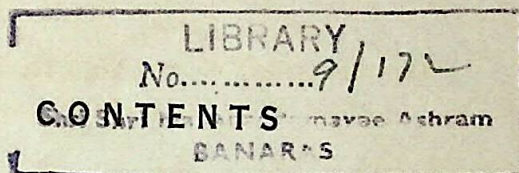
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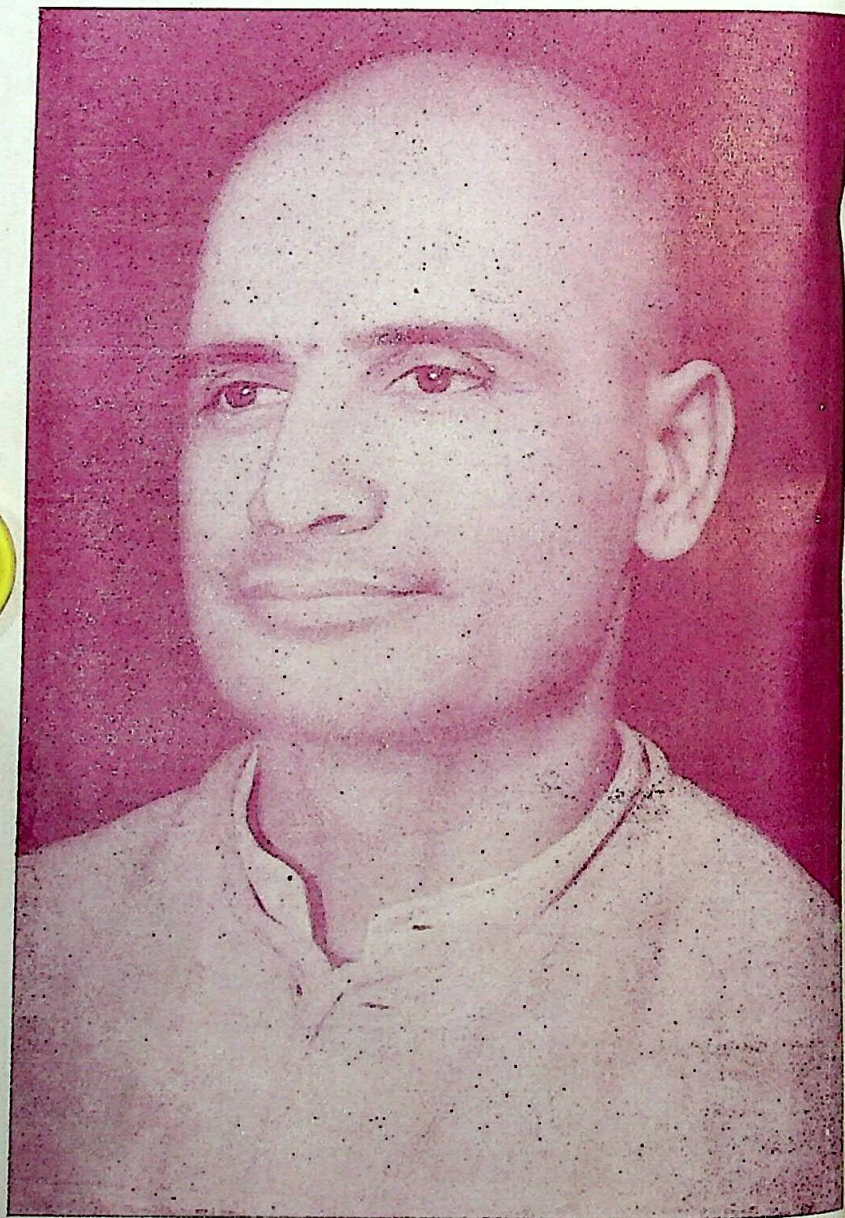
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The Gist of Religions

9/172



Swami Narayananda

PRESENTED

by Sri Jagannath Roy (Calcutta)

1

INTRODUCTION

Religion cannot and does not exist without the idea of Godhead, no matter whether God be regarded as personal or impersonal. Thus, religion connotes the ways and means adopted to attain or realize God. Religion can, therefore, be defined as the quest after an Eternal life.

The Supreme Being is One only without a second. And, It may be likened to the centre of a circle. The different radii that meet at the common centre are like the different religions. The Founders of all great religious sects have been men of God-realization. They followed certain paths and adopted certain methods to attain Godhood and preached them to their followers. A person may follow any path along any one of these radii according to his personal taste, tendency or inclination, and if he is sincere, faithful and labourious, he is sure to attain God-realization. Paths may differ but the Final meeting place of all religions is the same, viz., God. And yet, strange to say, there has been so much

of blood-shed in the world in the name of God and religion.

All true religions of the world stand on the firm foundation of a recognised moral and ethical code. All of them preach to their followers to love all creatures and to be truthful, kind, gentle, chaste, charitable, and the like; yet, very few follow these precepts. If the followers of different religions, had only strictly followed the moral and ethical code as laid down by their founders, we would have had real heaven on this very earth. But, alas! people forget the very basic things and commit so many heinous and sinful acts. This is mainly due to the lack of proper understanding, with the result that the whole world has been converted by the warring creeds into a very hell.

Real spiritual growth alone leads one to understand the true spirit of religion. It is then that one finds no excuse to pitch a quarrel with the follower of any other belief. In the vast majority of people there is no actual spiritual growth. Many have no idea of what other religions preach. It will not be incorrect even to assert that most people do not well know what their own religion teaches. Most of people are misguided by their own priests who, being themselves less developed

spiritually, take advantage of the ignorance and credibility of their teeming followers, and preach to them all sorts of malicious and scandalous things against other religions and thereby misguide and inflame them. This hypocrisy, narrow-mindedness, selfishness or mischief on the part of religious priests is the root cause of all quarrels, blood-shed and massacres in the name of God and religion.

Our attempt in this book would, therefore, be to present the prevailing truths of different religions in their true perspective to create and foster a spirit of proper understanding and fellow feeling amongst the followers of different religions of the world.

2

G O D

Creation presupposes a Creator. The idea of death comes with the idea of life. When we say that the world is ever changing and impermanent, it is understood that there is a Thing which does not change and is permanent. This permanent and unchanging Thing is called God.

There is no effect without a cause. Some thing can never come out of nothing. It is axiomatic. That some thing from which the whole universe comes or evolves is called God. The world cannot exist even for a second without God. Unintelligent force and matter can never react upon each other to produce intelligent and self-conscious beings.

Modern science has resolved force and matter into electrons, protons and atoms. Modern scientists have invented trains, motor-cars and aeroplanes, etc., which are made to run or fly through space with enormous speed with the aid of fire, water, electricity, etc. But machines and engines are insentient beings. They cannot run by them-

selves but require a conscious being, the intelligence of man, to make them work and run. A scientist, through ignorance, may deny the existence of God. But can he deny his own existence? He needs no proof for that. The inner-most voice, the pure Consciousness in man Itself is God. Let us take the example of the sun. The sun's rays spread in different directions of the universe covering entire space. Though the sun is the cause and the source of these innumerable rays an ignorant baby takes these multifarious rays and images of the sun as separate entities and denies the very existence of the sun. The sun may be regarded as God and its countless rays and images to the individual consciousness of sentient beings in the universe. That being the case, how can a man deny the existence of God and live? To deny God means to deny one's own self which is not only irrational but also impossible. Similarly in the body there are innumerable cell-lives. Millions and billions of white and red corpuscles are born and die inside the body everyday. But, still, all the cell-lives are subservient to the individual Soul and mind. When a person dies, these millions and billions of cell-lives perish completely. As is an individual Soul to the innumerable cell-lives inside a body, so is God to the

whole universe and its countless beings. Thus a denial of the existence of God tantamounts to extreme stupidity in a person. God does exist. He can be seen, experienced and felt by those who lead an absolutely pure life and make their minds pure, subtle and one-pointed.

God is only One, and is called by various names, viz., God, Brahman, Supreme Being, Supreme Intelligence, Supreme Energy, Supreme Spirit, Paramatman, Ultimate Truth, etc. Names may differ but the Thing is the same. God has no particular name or form; all the same It has numerous names and forms. God cannot be called as He, She or It; at the same time, God is expressed as He, She and It; God is the Lord of the Universe. He is the Cause of all causes, the Subject of all subjects. He is Infinite, Eternal, All-pervading, Immovable, Unchangeable, Birthless, Growthless, Deathless, Sexless. He is the Creator, Sustainer and Destroyer of this universe. Creation, Preservation and Destruction are constantly going on with God. There was never a time when this triple function was absent and there will never be a time when this three-in-one function will cease to be.

When we say that God is All-pervading, it becomes evident that there can be nothing devoid

of God. Not a single object but can exist without God. God is the efficient and material cause of this universe. The whole universe along with its beings comes from God, lives in God and, in the end, goes back to God. God is more real than anything else and He is in and behind everything. He is the Source and the greatest common measure of every being. God is smaller than the smallest and bigger than the biggest object. A thing smaller than the smallest and bigger than the biggest object is beyond the conception of human mind. In that one sense, God cannot be known. For, to know means to objectify a thing, and God being the Subject of all subjects cannot be objectified. To do that is quite impossible. Yet, in another sense, God is more than known to us. For, God is our own Atman; our innermost Self. As such, no proof is needed to prove our own existence. How can one deny one's own existence?

The highest conception of God by the human mind is *Sat-Chit-Ananda* (Existence, Knowledge and Bliss Absolute). Beyond this idea, the human mind cannot conceive. But even this idea of God as *Sat-Chit-Ananda* is only limiting the unlimited. But there is no way out of it.

God is *Sat-Chit-Ananda* and much more than that. He alone knows what He is and what He is not.

The one Imperishable Being is the Supreme Brahman (God). He is Omnipotent, Omnipresent and Omniscient, the Ancient, the Overruler, minuter than an atom, the Sustainer of all, of form inconceivable, Self-luminous and beyond the darkness of Maya or ignorance. He is Unmanifested, Eternal Existence, the Goal Supreme, in Whom all beings dwell and by Whom all the universe is pervaded. He is the Father, Mother, Grand Father, the Purifier, the One Thing to be Known, the Supporter, the Lord, the Witness, the Refuge, the Friend, the Origin, the Substantive, the Store-house, the Seed Immutable and Immortality Itself. God Knows Himself by Himself. He is the *Purusha* Supreme, the Source and Lord of Beings. He is the Self residing in all beings. He is the all seizing Death; the Prosperity of those who are prosperous. There is no being, whether moving or stationary, that can exist without God. He is supporting this whole universe by a portion of Himself. He is the Refuge of the universe and the undying Guardian of the Eternal Dharma (righteousness).

God is neither a being nor non-being. He shines through the functions of the senses but is

devoid of all senses; He is Absolute and yet Sustains all. He is without any Gunas; yet He is their experiencer. He is within and without all beings. He is both moving and unmoving. He is far and near, impartible; yet He exists as if divided into beings. He is Light of lights, beyond darkness, Knowledge—the One Thing to be Known, the Goal of all Knowledge. He is Self-effulgent, Ruler, Maker, the Source of Creation and beyond all imagination. He is the Creator and Destroyer of time (time or the idea of time disappears with the mind when one attains *Nirvikalpa Samadhi*). He, the self-existent, is everywhere without a body, without muscles, without the taint of sin, Radiant, Whole, Pure, Seeing all, Knowing all, and encompassing all. Mind does not comprehend Him but what cognizes the mind is God. Whoever among men comprehends It both as the not Known and as the Known—really comprehends It. God sleeps, as it were, in minerals, dreams in vegetables, wakes in animals and looks before and after and Knows Himself in man. Child souls see Him in wood and stones; grown ups, in sacred streams, lakes and natural phenomena while the wise regard Him as the All-pervading Self, their own Atman (Self).

3

BRAHMAN (GOD) AND THE UNIVERSE

ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात्पूर्णमुदच्यते ।

पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते ॥

ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः

Om Purnamadah purnamidam

Purnath purnamudachyathe

Purnasya Purnamadaya

Purnamevavasishyathe.

Om Shantih ! Shantih !! Shantih !!!

The above Mantra of Peace Invocation is taken from *Isavasya Upanishad*, the 1st. of the ten classical *Upanishads*. *Isavasya* belongs to the last and the fortieth chapter of the *Sukla Yajurveda* and is one of the oldest *Upanishads*. Every *Upanishad* has a Mantra for Peace Invocation which is to be chanted just before commencement and after completion of its study or reading (*Parayana*). A careful study of and a little deep thinking about this one Mantra reveals the whole gist of *Vedanta Philosophy* and establishes the position or relation of Brahman (God) with the universe.

The meaning of the above Mantra runs thus:-
 Om, The Thing that is not seen, That One Invisible Thing is Brahman which is ever full (*Purna*). All visible things that have come into existence (the vast universe) are also that Brahman which is full (*Purna*). Although this vast visible universe comes from *Purna Brahman*, still that Supreme Being (Brahman) remains ever full (*Purna*) and ever the same. Om Shantih ! Shantih !! Shantih !!!

To an ordinary man the above Mantra will carry no meaning and may, rather, confuse him. Hence, we shall explain it a little. The Mantra begins with the monosyllable "Om" and ends with "Om Shantih" three times. In this connection many may ask the following question, viz., what is the meaning of "Om" and from where do we get this word? Secondly, when the vast universe comes out from the Great Being (Brahman), how can that Brahman still remain full (*Purna*)? And again, How can the thing coming out from Brahman be also full (*Purna*)? Thirdly, what is the meaning of *Om Shantih*? Why should it be uttered three times and not once only. We shall clear these points in the succeeding pages.

'Om' stands for the Supreme Brahman. It is also called '*Shabda Brahman*' (Brahman as sound), and the '*Maha Bija Mantra*' (the origin of all Mantras or the great cause of all Mantras). The whole universe or creation originates from 'Om', lives in 'Om' and dissolves in 'Om'. Om is the cause of all sounds and words. This monosyllable is composed of three letters, i. e., AUM. A is a gluttural and the starting point of a sound or word. U rolls from the root to the end of the mouth; M is a labial and nasal and starts from the end of the mouth. Thus Om represents all sounds and words. In fact, there is no word or sound without Om. All words and sounds start from and end in Om.

Now, let us see where we get this word 'Om' from. Om is a Cosmic sound heard by the Yogic-mind (a pure, subtle and one-pointed mind). It is the power of Brahman (God) that evolves as mind and matter and as the visible universe. Brahman and Its Shakti (power) are identical. They are like the obverse and reverse of the same coin and quite inseparable. In their Essence they are one. Though one, they seem to diverge from one another, as it were, and part company in creation. This Shakti has three *Gunas*, viz., *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*. These *Gunas* are the qualities and

the substance of the Brahman Shakti, and the cause of all creation. There is not a single created thing devoid of these three Gunas. It is these Gunas that divide and differentiate one man from another, one woman from another woman and a Saint from a sinner, etc. They remain ever active. As such, there was not a time when there was no Creation and there will never be a time when there will be no Creation. Creation, Preservation and Destruction of worlds and worldly beings are constantly going on in Infinity without rest or respite. This triple-in-one function is ever going on with God (Brahman). So, to ask when creation began is to ask when God or Brahman had Its birth, which is absurd. Worlds and worldly beings have an origin, exist for sometime and, then, they go back to or merge in Brahman again.

In the process of Creation, when the Gunas cause a stir and get into motion, they produce a very subtle sound which a Yogic-mind alone can perceive. This sound is "Om". From this one word of a monosyllable issue forth all particular sounds, both lettered sounds with meaning and unlettered sounds without meaning. Thus, the starting point of all sounds is "Om" and this sound and its meaning denote the whole universe.

The sound "Om" is Eternal, ever the same without any change. It is common and universal to all the different languages of all times and climes. There can never be a single sound or word without Om.

The word Om with its three letters *A U M* represents Trinity, Brahma and His Shakti (the Creator and His Creative Power), Vishnu and His Shakti (the Preserver and His Protecting Power), and Shiva and His Shakti (the Destroyer and His Destroying Power). Om stands for *Sat-Chit-Ananda* (Existence, Knowledge and Bliss Absolute). It stands for time, space and causation; past, present and future; birth, growth and death; Spirit, mind and matter; waking, dream and dreamless-sleep-state; and, as a whole, It indicates the fourth state, viz., *Turiya* (Transcendental state). Om represents the physical, mental and astral planes, the three Vedas (Rig, Yajur and Sama). Thus, Om is the most scientific symbol of the Supreme Brahman and is the most appropriate name of that Supreme Being (God or Brahman). If, at all, there is any one universal Mantra which can represent the Supreme Being in all Its manifold Powers and Functions, and can embrace and satisfy the multifarious creeds, doctrines and dogmas, it is this one Mantra, Om.

Om does not mean any particular god or goddess but it includes all gods and goddesses and signifies the Supreme God Itself.

BRAHMAN:— The Ultimate Truth is called Brahman. It is Purna (Ever Full and Perfect). It is only One without a second. It is Birthless, Growthless, Deathless and Sexless. It has no beginning and no end. It is beyond time, space and causation. It is the Cause of all causes and the Power of all forces, the Light of all lights, Life of all lives, the Subject of all subjects, and the Lord of the universe. Brahman is Omnipotent, Omnipresent and Omniscient. It is the material and the efficient cause of this universe. This universe of names and forms cannot exist without Brahman. When we say that Brahman is All-pervading, Eternal and Infinite, it is quite evident that there is not a single thing devoid of Brahman, not a single object that can exist without Brahman. Therefore all beings come from Brahman, live in Brahman and, in the end, go back to Brahman. That "The universe is false and Brahman (God) alone is real" means that this universe of names and forms constantly undergoes changes, and, that a changing thing cannot but be impermanent and false. But behind all these changing things there is a Being without change and this

unchanging and unchangeable Thing is called Brahman. So, if we eliminate all the names and forms of this universe, what remains is Brahman and Brahman alone.

The highest conception of Brahman by the finite human mind is *Sat-Chit-Ananda* (Existence, Knowledge and Bliss Absolute). Beyond this idea, the human mind can have no conception of Brahman. This idea of *Sat-Chit-Ananda* is only limiting the Unlimited. Yet, there is no other way. Brahman is *Sat-Chit-Ananda* and much more than this. Brahman alone knows what Brahman is and what Brahman is not. There is yet another and a better way of expressing this Supreme Being. It is to call It "The Ocean of Consciousness by Itself or in Itself."

Brahman is more real than anything else and It is in and behind everything. As the individual Soul is to the innumerable tiny cells that are found living inside a living body, so is Brahman to the innumerable worlds and their beings. When the Soul leaves the body, these innumerable lives perish completely. Likewise do the millions and billions of existing worlds in the absence of Brahman. Brahman is the very breath of all existence, viz., innumerable worlds and their countless beings. Brahman is the

connecting link between an atom and an atom, between a being and a being, and between a world and a world. Brahman is the Life Principle behind all the multifarious worlds and their beings.

There can be only One Infinity. For, Infinity is a Thing without a beginning, without a middle and without an end. If there be two Infinities, they would limit each other and thus become finite. Infinity cannot be divided. It remains Infinite under all circumstances and conditions. So, there can be only One Omnipotent, Omnipresent and Omniscient Being. When we say that a Being is All-pervading, All-Knowing and All-Powerful, no other thing can be named as such. Otherwise, one would limit the other and the epithet would be inapplicable to both and meaningless also. Thus, there can be only One Brahman or God who can be called as *Sat-Chit-Ananda*, Omnipotent, Omniscient and Omnipresent and Infinity. It is the Shakti (Power) of Brahman with Its manifold Powers which evolves as mind and matter and the multifarious names and forms of this vast universe. And again, it is the same Power that pervades the whole universe as the Life Principle. Brahman and Its Shakti are not two separate things. As the subtle

vapour becoming cooler and grosser, takes the form of cloud, frost, rain, hail-stone or snow, etc., in the same way, the Shakti of Brahman evolves as this visible universe of names and forms. Brahman is the cause of this universe while Its Shakti (Power) evolves as universe. Again it is the Brahman Shakti that pervades the whole universe as Its Life Principle and Intelligence and the Consciousness of living beings. Thus from Purna (From Purna Brahman) this universe (which is also Purna) comes and still Brahman remains Purna. And the uttering of "Om Shantih" three times is a prayer to God or to Brahman asking for Peace and avoidance of all sorts of disturbances that may arise during the time of study and meditation. The uttering of "Om Shantih" for the first time means, "O Lord ! let there be peace unto the gross body and let there not be any disturbances therefrom." The uttering of "Om Shantih" for the second time means, "O Lord ! let there not be any disturbance from the subtle body and from external agents." Its utterance for the third time means, "O Lord ! let there be perfect Peace and no disturbance from the causal body and from the Cosmic agents."

Regarding creation, many people, through ignorance, put a variety of questions. Some of these are :

1. If God or Brahman is pure and perfect, why did He create or why has He created such an imperfect universe ?

2. If Brahman is the only Reality, how has that One Thing become so many ?

3. If Brahman is the Supreme Light and Knowledge, where does this darkness and ignorance come from ?

So many such questions arise in the mind of an ignorant man. We shall now try to answer these questions :

To an ignorant man, this world of names and forms is a great reality and also a great riddle. We see how parents bring toys of different colours and shapes - all made of say rubber - and give them to their children to play with. Without knowing the real worth or value of these toys, the children get attached to their names, forms and colours. And if, by chance, any one of these toys be lost, the child cries hoarse and is not easily consoled until and unless another toy is brought for the child to play with. The children get so much attached to their toys that they do not care to know the material out of which they

are made. They are simply carried away by the false and outward names, forms and colours of the toys. But, the parents know full well what their true worth is, that they are all made of rubber and that their names, forms and colours are changeable and false. So, they are not at all attached to the toys as the children are. Like children, an ignorant man takes the names and forms of this world as real, clings to them, gets attached to them so much that he loses sight of the Real Thing, i.e., Brahman, which is the material and efficient cause of this universe and its multifarious names, forms and colours. But only when he attains *Nirvikalpa Samadhi*, he, like the parents in the simili, sees Brahman and Brahman alone behind all names and forms of this universe. To him, Brahman becomes the only Reality then, and the numerous names and forms of this universe lose their significance for him.

An ordinary man experiences three states every day, i. e., waking, dream and dreamless-sleep-states. In the waking-state, this world of names and forms is a great reality to him. But, when he enters the dream-state, he entirely forgets the waking-state world. He weeps and laughs; enjoys and suffers according to the nature

of his dreams. On entering the dreamless-sleep-state, he forgets both the waking-state world and the dream world. In all these three states, an ordinary man gets deceived through ignorance. Apart from these three states of existence, there is yet another state called *Turiya* (Transcendental-state) which can be experienced only by the most fortunate few who lead a life of purity, self-discipline, self-control, celibacy and attain Nirvikalpa Samadhi. In *Turiya-state* one sees Unity in diversity and Brahman behind all names and forms of this universe.

Brahman is more Real than anything else. In fact, That is the only one Thing without a second. This statement is not based upon any theoretical hypothesis. Experience has revealed it and every one can experience this state, provided one follows the true path. In the state of Nirvikalpa Samadhi, the ideas of subject, object and knowledge become one. Finally, even this idea of one also vanishes; for, an idea of one even presupposes the idea of two or many also. In fact, all dualities vanish in the state of Nirvikalpa Samadhi and the mind, will, ego, Chitta (mind-stuff) and intellect, all merge in the Supreme Being and the one Thing that remains and is perceived is the Ocean of Consciousness

by Itself or in Itself. No question about this universe can arise in the mind in that state as there is no trace of the mind in that Samadhi. There can be no idea of either Freedom or of bondage also. When there is only One Thing, i.e., Brahman, and one alone, who can be in bondage and who free? Such questions become meaningless and absurd. So the question, "How has that One Thing become so many" will have no meaning. For, in the first place, One Perfect Whole can never become many Perfect Wholes and many Perfect Wholes can never be coalesced into One Perfect Whole. As a matter of fact, that One Thing has not become many. It is still One only. So, the question "How this miserable imperfect world came from that One Supreme Perfect Being" loses its significance.

The world is neither good nor bad. The ideas of good and bad are the creations of the impure mind and the ego. In this universe, life and death, pain and pleasure, etc., i.e., all the pairs of opposites are a strange mixture of good and bad. There is not a single thing which we can call absolutely good or absolutely bad. The thing that we call bad has something good somewhere hidden in it and the thing that we call good has really a trace of something bad in it somewhere.

We can clearly understand this after a little careful study. The world is nothing but a projection of one's mind. If the mind is pure, one sees purity and goodness everywhere. On the contrary, an impure mind sees impurity and bad things all around. Besides this, there can be no knowledge and no progress in this world without the pairs of opposites existing side by side. To know goodness there must be some badness somewhere and to know vice there must be virtue existing somewhere. One should overcome bad desires, thoughts and acts by good ones. One should remove sins by virtuous desires, thoughts and acts and when one gains purity of mind, one should go beyond the idea of good and bad and attain Samadhi. In fact, to gain Samadhi and to solve the riddle of life one has to go beyond the idea of all the pairs of opposites.

In reality, Brahman alone is everywhere and nothing else. One can actually realise this state and understand this great fact on the attainment of *Nirvikalpa Samadhi*. Otherwise such a statement baffles the intellect and understanding of an ordinary man. To an ordinary man, however great he may be intellectually, this world of names and forms is always more real than any-

thing else, and, as such, he merely laughs and scoffs when he is told that this world is false and that God or Brahman alone exists. For him, this world alone exists and God escapes his notice. When a man attains Samadhi, the tables are turned, the world vanishes and Brahman alone exists. Such a man perceives Brahman everywhere and in every object. To explain how that One Being appears as many and thereby to solve the riddle of this world, *Vedanta* utilizes the simili of a rope and snake and that of a mirage. In darkness, and through ignorance, one sees a snake in a rope lying in a zig-zag way in the corner of a room. Afraid of the snake, one brings light and sees the rope. The idea of snake, then, disappears from one's mind. Likewise, an ordinary man sees this world of names and forms, takes it as something real, clings to it and its multifarious forms, gets attached to them and forgets God or Brahman who is the material and efficient cause of this universe. But when the same man purifies his mind and attains Nirvikalpa Samadhi, he only scoffs over his ignorance and the horrible dream that was deceiving him and perceives Brahman in and behind every object. So, an impure mind is the real cause of bondage. Purity of mind is the sure way to Freedom. Thus the ideas

of bondage and Freedom are only an intermediate state, the creation of the mind only. That is why a man after attaining *Nirvikalpa Samadhi* finds no meaning either in bondage or in Freedom. When there is only One Thing, which is ever pure, perfect, unborn, free and ever the same, the idea of bondage and Freedom can have no meaning whatsoever.

A thirsty man sees a mirage (in a desert) for the first time and takes it to be a real thing and runs after water. After a long and futile attempt, he finds out his mistake and understands that the thing seen was only a false appearance. But even after the dawn of knowledge the man does see a mirage in the desert but his angle of vision undergoes a change. He now knows that there is a green and fertile belt of land somewhere in the back ground and the mirage is only its reflection. In like manner does a man who after attaining *Nirvikalpa Samadhi* comes down to the plane of relative consciousness, see this universe of names and forms but with quite a changed angle of vision. He sees the All-pervading Brahman behind all the multifarious names and forms. And he is not at all deceived by the phenomenon but remains unmoved and retains perfect equanimity of mind under all the pairs

of opposites. Then, he goes beyond the ideas of the pairs of opposites and of the Gunas.

Even in spite of this lengthy explanation, the question "How Brahman, being One, creates misery and suffering for Itself in the form of this universe" is sure to trouble the mind of an ordinary mortal. But the question itself is illogical. For, as we have already said, *the One Thing* cannot become many and many things cannot become the One Thing. It is like searching for the progeny of a barren woman. A barren woman and her offspring are self-contradictory. In fact, a barren woman cannot bear children, and if she does, she cannot be called barren. Ordinary mortals, by mistake, see the children of a barren woman. How can they then, say that the woman is barren? On the contrary, the man who has attained Nirvikalpa Samadhi sees the barrenness of the woman. He does not see any of her children. Likewise, an ignorant man sees the names and forms of this universe, takes them as real, loves them and gets attached to them and loses sight of Brahman or God. But a Saint, who has attained Nirvikalpa Samadhi, sees Brahman and Brahman alone in and behind every name and form. Out of gold a variety of ornaments such as, rings, chains, bracelets, bangles, etc.,

are made. A child takes these names and forms of gold as real thing without the least idea of gold which is the real cause of the names and forms of the ornaments. But an adult knows well that the ornaments may be melted and changed at any time but the one real thing behind them all is gold. So, an ordinary man and the one who has attained Nirvikalpa Samadhi remain as poles apart. One remains in pitch darkness, while the other basks in bright sunlight. Light and darkness cannot coexist. Where there is one, there cannot be the other. A man of Wisdom sees only Brahman everywhere, behind all names and forms, while an ignorant man sees names and forms of this universe and takes them to be real and thereby loses sight of Brahman. So, for him this world of names and forms becomes a great riddle to solve. And if he be told that the world is false and Brahman alone is Real it is impossible for him to believe the statement. On the other hand, spiritually advanced person who has attained Nirvikalpa Samadhi clearly realises the unreality of the universe and the Reality of Brahman. How this transformation takes place, how ignorance first appeared, how man gets deceived by the names and forms of this universe and forgets his Real Nature are

questions that will ever remain unanswered. They creep up in the minds of ordinary mortals only who suffer and enjoy and are merged in the sense-enjoyments of the world. But for a *Jnani* (one who has attained the highest Wisdom) these questions have no meaning or importance and consequently do not at all arise. To explain these questions and to solve the riddle, Shankara has brought into use the *Maya theory*. Maya is a thing which has neither existence nor non-existence. To an ignorant man the world seems real; to the man of highest Wisdom, it is unreal. In reality, there is only One Thing

A bee enters a room through a broken window-pane. Deceived by the white wall, it takes it to be an exit and rushes towards it, strikes its head against it and gets stunned. Then, seeing light coming through the window-panes, it flies towards them, strikes its head against them and gets more confused. Though the way through which it entered is still open, it forgets the path, and makes vain attempts to go out through the unbroken window-panes. Thus, in its futile attempts the bee flies from wall to window, window to window, window to wall and gets exhausted and finally perishes. Here, no body forced the bee to get into the room, and, again, no body

obstructed it from coming out. How does the bee, then, get deluded? What is the cause of its delusion? The bee itself is the cause of its delusion. To die in the room or to come out of it lay with the bee. So, does a *Jiva* (individual Soul) come into the world playfully, with a mind to know and senses to enjoy. The mind is the *Jiva's* chief instrument of knowledge. It knows the world through the mind which gathers experiences of the world through the five gross and five subtle senses. In fact, the Self (*Jiva*) remains as the witness of the mind and the senses. As such, It is not at all subject to any change, bondage or Freedom. For, It is ever Pure, Perfect and Free. But the mind constantly externalising, enjoying the sense-objects and desiring and thinking of sense-objects becomes impure and weak and apparently loses sight of the Self. It consists of three Gunas., viz., *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*. Of these *Sattva* stands for light and purity. *Rajas* for activity and *Tamas* for darkness and inertia. *Rajo-Guna* acts either on *Sattva* or on *Tamas*. In the former case it takes the embodied being towards Enlightenment and in the latter, it works towards its bondage. So, one's own mind is the cause of bondage or Freedom. An impure mind leads one to bondage and

a pure mind to Freedom. When Tamo-Guna predominates, a person lives in delusion and bondage, but when Sattva-Guna predominates, one gets rid of ignorance and bondage, perceives the Self and realises Brahman and attains Freedom. Thus the impurity of the mind is the real cause of ignorance and bondage, and its purity leads one to Freedom. The mind gets contaminated and impure by Kama (lust and desire), Krodha (anger), Lobha (greed), Moha (infatuation), Mada (pride), and Matsarya (hatred). It is therefore absolutely necessary to give these as wide a bath as possible to make the mind pure, subtle and one-pointed. One must exercise control over all the senses and lead a virtuous life. When one has gained purity, one-pointedness and subtleness of the mind to a certain extent one must cultivate higher sorts of meditation and concentration and try to attain Nirvikalpa Samadhi. When one attains Samadhi one automatically solves all problems and the riddle of life. In the state of Samadhi only one realises Brahman, and sees Brahman as one's own Self and perceives Brahman everywhere and in every object. When one attains this state, the ideas of bondage or Freedom, pain or pleasure have no meaning.

BRAHMAN AND THE INDIVIDUAL SOULS (*Jivas*):

Now let us see the connection between Brahman and the multifarious *Jivas* (individual Souls). As has been said, Brahman is the Ultimate Truth. Though It is only One, It apparently appears as many. As an illustration, take the sun. Millions and billions of rays dart forth from the sun automatically and cover the entire space of the universe. These rays of light fall upon multifarious objects, some of which have very smooth surfaces, others smooth, some semi-smooth, some rough and still others very rough surface. These, in their turn produce the image of the sun in a very clear, clear, semi-clear, dull and in a blurred way respectively. Some of them even do not produce any image at all. These myriads of images of the sun appear as separate entities. A child takes these images as so many suns whereas an adult knows that there is only one sun and all these are its reflections. In like manner, does an ignorant man lose sight of Brahman. He takes the *Jivas* as so many separate beings, while a man of Wisdom sees only Brahman everywhere. Brahman is the Cause of all causes. It is the Life Principle of every being. It is the Ocean of Consciousness by Itself. The pure Consciousness, the innermost Voice in every being is Brah-

man. This Infinite Consciousness, this Ocean of Consciousness by Itself is everywhere and in every object, covering the entire universe in a very subtle form. There is not a single object devoid of this Consciousness. This Consciousness is the Life behind an atom and knows the secrets of electrons and protons, and their Cause also. But the manifestation of this Supreme Consciousness differs in different objects. As the sun's rays falling upon a very smooth surface of a big mirror produces its image in the very clear way and the same light falling on a calm water surface reflects its image in a clear way, but falling on rough black stone, it fails to produce any image of the sun at all; so is that one Supreme Consciousness reflected in different lives like human beings, animals, plants and minerals in a variety of ways. The same Consciousness manifesting Itself in manifold objects and beings and each of the latter being equipped with a mind to think, an intellect to judge, an ego to feel, a desire to appear as a separate entity, a will to act and senses to enjoy, grows into an individual and forgets Its Real Nature and the Source from which It emanated. The individual Soul is the master of a living body. It gets Its light and life from the Supreme Being or Brahman and

the mind, in turn, gets its light and life from the *Jiva* (individual Soul). It is the mind that works as intellect, will, ego and Chitta (mind-stuff), and again, it is the mind that works all gross and subtle senses and acquires knowledge of this universe. Purity, subtleness and one-pointedness of the mind makes one catch the image of the *Jivatman* and realise Brahman in Samadhi, while its impurity makes one indulge in the enjoyment of sense-objects. The more one takes pleasure in sense-enjoyments, the farther does one go away from the Truth and the more impure and polluted does one's mind become. Such a man remains in utter darkness and bondage. Multifarious desires and sense-enjoyments dissipate the powers of the mind which thereby loses its power of concentration. This impurity and loss of power of concentration are the cause of bondage and of untold misery.

Let us take another illustration to show how the one Brahman appears as many *Jivas* (Souls). In a living body, there is a Soul and a mind, in addition to innumerable tiny cell-lives. Each cell-life is quite distinct from another. Millions of these tiny lives are born and millions of them die inside the body everyday. These millions and billions of tiny lives get their light and life

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from the Self and from the mind. Still, they seem to have a separate existence. As the one Soul and one mind is to the innumerable cell-lives, so is Brahman and the Cosmic-mind to billions of worlds and to their beings. Without the *Jivatman* (Self) and the mind, the numerous small lives cannot live inside the body even for a second. We know for certain what happens to these lives when death comes or when the Soul leaves the body. Likewise, Brahman is the cause of this vast universe and of its multifarious beings. Brahman pervades the entire universe as the Life Force or as the Consciousness of beings. So, in reality, there is only One Thing and not many.

In conclusion, it should be clearly understood that there is only One Thing and that One Thing is called Brahman or God. Brahman is Eternal, Infinite, All-pervading, Immovable, Unchangeable, Birthless, Growthless, Deathless and Sexless. Brahman evolves this universe out of Itself and then again, It pervades the whole universe by Itself. There is not a single thing without Brahman. During the Samadhi state one experiences only One Homogeneous Thing everywhere and there is no room whatsoever for a second thing. Till one attains Samadhi, this world with its multifarious beings does appear to be a reality.

It cannot be denied by an ordinary being, Nirvikalpa Samadhi is just like tracing a ray of light back to its origin. When any single ray of light emerges from the sun, it seems to be quite separate from the sun and, through ignorance, it is thought to be quite different from the sun. But when it retraces and reaches the sun, it becomes one with the sun. Likewise, when the individual mind, will, intellect, ego, Chitta, etc., merge into the Self and the Self merges into Brahman in Samadhi one attains Freedom or Moksha. In other words, one then realises one's own True Nature and the age-long ignorance is removed. If one ray of light goes back to and merges in the sun, there are still innumerable rays working in the universe. Similarly, if one man attains Nirvikalpa Samadhi and Freedom, there are billions and billions of others to carry on with this Samsara (this world of birth, growth, decay and death). Nirvikalpa Samadhi alone solves the riddle of life; nothing else helps. When one attains Samadhi one learns that there was never a time when one did not exist and there will never be a time when one would cease to exist. As the Atman, one is ever pure, perfect and Free. The idea of bondage is only a myth, a figment of impure mind and ego.

4

SCRIPTURES

Every great religion has a founder (or founders) and a book to follow which is considered by its followers to be the holiest of the holy. These sacred books contain the precepts and teachings of the great founders of the various religions. These founders are called by different names, viz., God-Incarnates, Prophets, Messiahs, Buddhas, Christs, Tirthankaras, Saints, Rishis, etc. By whatever name these men may be called, one thing is certain, that these great men were all men of Wisdom, i.e., those that had attained Nirvikalpa Samadhi. These people, in general, may be called as real *Jivan-Muktas* (living-free) and the words of wisdom spoken by them were collected and collated by their followers into books called Scriptures.

All the religions claim that their books (Scriptures) are eternal and directly imparted or revealed by God Himself, or by some other supernatural being. Whatever the claim, we have to understand the spirit of these claims and not to

take them in the literary sense. The spirit of these claims is this:—It is said that a *Knower of Brahman* becomes Brahman Itself. For, a man of God-realization of the highest type or a *Jivan-Mukta* always lives in God, and moves in God. Though he works the body and the senses, he does so with the aid of a purified ego and the major portion of his mind lives in God all the twenty-four hours. In other words, a *Jivan-Mukta* lives in *Turiya-state* (Transcendental-state) all the time. Such a man perceives Unity in diversity. The mind is a very subtle thing. It has no form or colour of its own, but it takes the form and colour of the thought-object. So, when the mind constantly lives in Brahman it becomes one with Brahman and there is no difference between Brahman and a *Brahma-Jnani* (*Jivan-Mukta*) because he constantly identifies himself with Brahman without the least ego idea. In this sense, every Scripture can be taken as the word of God or words of Wisdom directly imparted by God.

Secondly, when the followers of different religions claim that their Scriptures are eternal, it does not mean that the books as printed or written are eternal. It is the words of Wisdom and the Truths that they contain that are eternal. For,

truth is always truth. It brooks no change what ever the time and the clime. When we say $2+2=4$, the statement is true at all times and in all climes. Such are the facts stated in the Scriptures.

All the Scriptures contain four parts, viz., *Srutis* (philosophy) *Smritis* (the moral and ethical code that is to be followed by the followers from their birth to death), *Puranas* (mythology) and rituals. Of these four groups, Philosophy is eternal. *Smritis* (moral code) undergo changes and modifications to suit the times and the clime. Mythology deals with the lives of gods, goddesses and other great men. These stories throw light on certain subtle truths to make them easier for an ordinary man to understand them. Lastly come rituals. They deal with all the paraphernalia of worshipping God, *Mantras* and *Yantras* (mystic syllables and diagrams used in white and black magic, etc.).

The Ultimate Truth is One and One only. All the different religions and their founders proclaim this one Truth in different ways and in different languages. In whatever language one may speak, and in whatever style one may preach, the Truth is ever the same. There may, however, be different and numerous paths to attain this

Truth; but the Ultimate Truth is the common property of each and every man and woman. No nation, no Saint, no sect, no doctrine and no dogma can make an absolute claim of this Truth. But only he who is sincere, pure and perfect attains this Truth and gets liberated from this *Samsara* (the wheel of birth, growth, decay and death).

Let us now see what the different Scriptures of the world preach. One thing common to all the Scriptures is that they all admit the existence of God and a Soul. Secondly, they all admit that this existence of God and Soul is eternal. Thirdly, they all admit and talk of Freedom or Emancipation and sin as the cause of bondage, and preach the rules of good conduct to be observed and concentration of mind to be practised for the purification of the mind and for the attainment of Freedom. All religions preach strict observance of the moral and ethical code of conduct. In one word, all the religions stand on the firm foundation of a moral and ethical code of conduct. All religions admit rebirth, *Karma-Phala* (action and its fruit), the coming of great Saviours styled as *Avataras* by Hinduism, *Buddhas* and *Bodhisattvas* by Buddhism, *Tirthankaras* and *Arhats* by Jainism, *Qutubs* by Islam, Prophets by Judaism,

Messiahs by Christianity, and *Soshyants* by Zoroastrianism, etc. The different religions also admit the necessity of a *Guru* (teacher), *Mantra-Jap* (Sacred Name of God to repeat, remember and to meditate on), and symbols. All these are common to all religions.

5

THE GIST OF THE SCRIPTURES

(i) HINDUISM

The foremost existing religions of the world are: Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism and Sikhism in India—Taoism and Confucianism in China—Shintoism in Japan—Islam and Sufism in Mid-Asia and Europe and Judaism and Christianity in Europe and America. Of these religions, some are monistic in concept and the others dualistic, i.e., some give prominence to *Adwaita* (monism) and others to *Dwaita* (duality). Yet it will be seen that every religion starts with duality and ends with *Adwaita*.

The religion of the Hindu-Aryans is called by various names, viz, *Sanatana-Dharma*, (the ancient Law or the Eternal religion), *Vedic-Dharma*, Hinduism, etc. The Scriptures of this religion are called Vedas, and they are four in number, i.e., *Rig-Veda*, *Yajur-Veda*, *Sama-Veda* and *Atharva-Veda*. Each Veda consists of four parts—the *Mantras* (hymns), the *Brahmanas* (rituals), the *Aranyakas* (code of conduct) and the *Upanishads*

(philosophy). The Mantras (hymns) are in praise of gods and goddesses for material and spiritual prosperity. The Brahmanas deal with the sacrificial rites. The Aranyakas are rules and regulations for the *Vanaprasthas* (retired people after household life, i. e., life of preparation for Sannyasa). In other words, Aranyakas give a philosophical meaning to rituals. The Upanishads contain the knowledge or philosophy of the Vedas. They are philosophy in the sense that they make an enquiry into Truth or Reality, but unlike pure speculation, they claim to arrive at positive results. The truths they reveal are not mere theory, liable to modification with the advance of science, but they are positive and ultimate, verified and verifiable. The truths they reveal do not stand on the shifting facts of phenomenal life, but are firmly rooted in those of life in all its aspects and in the very nature of consciousness.

The teachings based on the Upanishads are called *Vedanta* (the end of the Vedas or the *Jnana-Kanda*). Vedanta includes *Dwaita* (duality), *Visishhta-Adwaita* (qualified non-duality), and *Adwaita* (monism or non-duality). The Vedanta, to all intents and purposes, forms the Scripture of the Hindus, and all systems of orthodox philosophy must take it as their very foundation. Vedanta is

all-embracing, it makes room for all sects and creeds. It has no quarrel with any other creed in this world. Vedanta recognises all Incarnations of God, Messiahs and Prophets as the embodiments of the same Principle that stands at the back of all and inspires them. Vedanta believes in the potential Divinity of all Souls and encourages the different creeds to follow their own paths according to their tastes, tendencies and inclinations. It asks the followers of different religions and philosophical systems to retain their own distinctive features but, at the same time, to practise tolerance and to assimilate the truths of other religions and systems. Vedanta combines faith and reason or religion and philosophy and holds to strict ethical discipline as a means of God-realization or the attainment of Samadhi, which alone solves the riddle of life, here and hereafter.

Hinduism does not depend upon any one particular Saint or Prophet. It is not a particular system of thought but a common-wealth of systems. It has no one particular Founder. It represents the spiritual experiences of great *Rishis* (Seers). All the different schools of Philosophy and religion of Hinduism depend upon the Vedas as the final authority. Under the authority of the Vedas and in the common name of Hinduism, there are

different schools of thought and Philosophy, viz., *Nyaya, Vaiseshika, Sankhya, Yoga, Purva Mimamsa* and *Vedanta*. All these six schools deal with philosophy. Besides these, there are other religious sects called *Saivism, Vaishnavism, Tantricism*, (worshippers of Mother Shakti), and worshippers of Sun god and god Ganesha.

GOD AND SELF:—God permeates the entire universe. He possesses the purest power of reaching everything. His hands and feet are everywhere; His eyes and ears are everywhere; He stands encompassing all in the world. Men see, hear and speak through Him. But seeing, hearing and speaking, they really find Him not; wonder but do not understand. Seeing, they see not; knowing, they know not. The Enlightened ones alone do see with Wisdom-illuminated eyes—*“The whole of this restless moving world is but a little part of Me; the rest of Me is in eternal rest. Those who love Me with sincere love they are in Me and I also am ever in them.”*—Neither any agency, nor any action does the Lord create for the world, nor does He bring about any union with the fruit of actions. It is the universal ignorance that does it all. He takes note of the merit or demerit of none. Knowledge is enveloped in ignorance; that is why human beings get deluded. But if ignorance

is destroyed by the knowledge of the Self, this knowledge reveals the Supreme Being as an effulgent sun. Life is under the ever-present influence of God and the life of the physical body is subordinate to the life of the Soul, which has a life beyond this worldly life. But for Consciousness, the universe disappears. But the Self cannot be doubted. For, none can doubt himself, his very existence. The Supreme Being dwelling in each individual body is called *Jivatman* or Self. The Self is neither earth, nor water, nor fire, nor air, nor *Akasa* (ether), but It is the witness of these and Consciousness by Itself. The Self does not belong to any caste, creed, colour, sex, sect, etc. It is unattached and formless. Virtue and vice, pleasure and pain, etc., belong to the mind only and not to the Self. The Self is neither the doer nor the enjoyer. It is ever free. It is the pure Consciousness and Supreme Bliss in which the whole universe rests. The Self is Witness, All-pervading, Perfect, One, Free, Intelligence, Self-effulgent, Actionless, Unattached, Desireless and Quiet. The Self pervades the whole universe and the universe exists in the Self. The Self is unconditioned, Immutable, Formless, unimpassioned, unperturbed and untroubled by virtue and vice. As the same all-pervading *Akasa* (ether) is inside and outside a jar, even so does

the Eternal, the All-pervasive Brahman (God) exist in all things as the Self. The Self is tranquil, spotless and beyond Nature. Knower, known and knowledge—these three do not exist in reality. It is through Self that this triad appears as a result of ignorance. It is different from what is known and It is beyond what is unknown. The Self has neither bondage, nor Freedom. These two rest in the mind and when this illusion loses its prop and support it ceases to exist. The Self is not an object of perception and nothing whatsoever is really done by the Self. The Self neither comes nor goes. The Self can neither be posited nor negated. For, assertion and denial are creations of thought, but the Self is beyond thought. The Self is dearer than the son, wife, wealth, etc. The Self was Brahman in the beginning and it knew only Itself as 'I am Brahman'. The Self is the Witness of vision, Hearer of hearing, Thinker of thought, Knower of knowledge and It transcends hunger, thirst, grief, delusion, decay and death. It is the Self that has entered this perilous and inaccessible place (body), and is the Maker of the universe. For, It is the maker of all, all is this Self, and again, indeed; It is the Self of all. The Self is unknowable, Eternal, Taintless, Birthless, Infinite and beyond the subtle ether (*Akasa*).

The great, birthless Self which is identified with the intellect and is in the midst of the organs, lies in the ether that is within the heart. It is the controller of all, the Lord of all, the Ruler of all. It does not become better through good work nor worse through bad work. It is the Lord of all, the Ruler and Protector of all beings. It is the signpost that serves as the boundary to keep the different worlds apart. By knowing the Self alone does one become a Sage. But the Self is imperceptible, for, It is never perceived, for It is never attached; unfettered for It never feels pain and never suffers injury.

As a lump of salt has no interior or exterior but is entire and purely saline in taste, even so is the Self without any interior or exterior, entire and pure Intelligence alone. There is no duality in It. It is imperceptible, undecaying, unfettered and It is both far and near. It is within and without everything. It moves and moves not, i.e., in Its real absolute state It moves not but in Its conditional aspect It appears to be everchanging and ever in motion. The Self is immanent and also transcendent, i.e., beyond creation and beyond limitation. It has two aspects, the conditioned and unconditioned, hence two opposite epithets are given to It.

It is through the power of the Atman (Self) that the mind functions, eyes see, ears hear, etc., and life functions. The mind comprehends the world and the Self comprehends the mind. The Self is ever Free. It never was, nor is, nor will be bound. So any attempt on Its part to set Itself Free is nothing but delusion and bondage. Yet desire for Moksha (Freedom) is absolutely necessary for an average deluded person of the world. As the sun is not affected by the defects of the eyes, so does the Self remain unaffected by the world and its miseries. Brahman is seen in the Self as one sees oneself in a mirror. The Self cannot be described in words, nor perceived by the senses, nor revealed by rituals, prayers and penances. When the understanding of the higher mind (*Buddhi* or intellect) — which is the light of *Atman* (Self) and the faculty that reveals the Self—becomes calm and refined, when, one's whole being is purified in meditation and attains Samadhi, one realises the Self and the Absolute Brahman. The Self is not attained by mere discussion, through intellectuality or through book learning, but it is gained by him who longs for It, yearns for It with a travail heart and attains Nirvikalpa Samadhi.

CREATION OR THE WORLD:— As waves, ripples foam and bubbles are not different from water, even so is the universe emanating from God not different from It. As cloth, when analysed, is found to be nothing but thread made of cotton, even so is this universe, intelligently considered, nothing but God. As sugar and molasses in a sugar-cane are wholly pervaded by the juice, even so is the universe pervaded by God and God alone. The world appears only through the ignorance of God; it disappears with the true knowledge of God, even as a ghost appears from non-cognition of a stump of a tree and disappears with its proper recognition. Just as an earthen pot dissolves into earth, a wave dissolves in water, a gold bracelet, into gold, even so does this universe which has emanated from God dissolve into God in the end. In reality, therefore, the world does not exist apart from God. This phenomenal world is like an earthen jar which is neither to be renounced, nor accepted nor destroyed. It is bondage when the mind desires or grieves at any thing, rejects or accepts anything, feels happy or angry at anything. Desire alone makes the phenomenal world look real and in true renunciation of all kinds of desires lies our salvation. Where there is a desire, there is the world.

Attachment or aversion, bondage or freedom, etc., are attitudes of the mind only. When the mind is free from all kinds of pairs of opposites, it becomes indifferent to religious merits, worldly prosperity, sensual-enjoyment and even liberation. When all desires are given up, the ocean of the world gets dried up and a man's look is vacant, his action, purposeless, his senses, inoperative. One appears to get a plethora of enjoyments through acquiring worldly objects; but, in fact, one cannot be truly happy without renouncing all such objects. For, in enjoyment, there is a fear of disease; in social position, there is the fear of falling off; in wealth, there is the fear of robbers and poverty; in honour, there is the fear of humiliation; in power, there is the fear of enemies and foemen; in beauty, there is the fear of old age; in Scriptural erudition, there is the fear of opponents; in virtue, there is the fear of traducers, and in body, there is the fear of death. Renunciation alone eliminates all fear.

This world is nothing but a state of Consciousness. In reality, there is God and God alone. For example, this world of names and forms appears as a reality to an ordinary man in the waking-state. But when the same man enters dream-state it vanishes. Then, it is the dream-world that be-

comes real. When the same man enters into deep-sleep-state, the dream-world also disappears. And when the same man attains Samadhi and thereby attains *Turiya*-state (Transcendental-state), the waking-state, dream-state, and the sleep-state all disappear, and the man sees God and God alone behind all the names and forms of the universe.

God created mind first and moved about worshipping Himself. In the beginning, this universe was but the Self only. He desired a mate and divided His very body into two and then mankind was born. When the Self enters the universe of names and forms, it begins to differentiate. When It does any work, It is called the vital force; when It speaks, It is called the organ of speech; when It sees, It is called the eye; when It hears, It is called the ear; when It thinks, It is called the mind. All these are merely Its names according to Its different functions. It is through the mind that one sees, hears, etc. As a spider moves along the thread it produces and as from a fire fly tiny sparks in all directions, so do from this Self emanate all organs, all worlds, all gods and all beings. Brahman has two forms, i.e., gross and subtle; mortal and immortal, limited and unlimited, defined and undefined. It is the gross form that appears as the five elements and as this universe, but Its

essence is the subtle form. That which is, that which was and that which is yet to be, all this is nothing but this Infinite Being. With the knowledge of God, all fetters fall off. With the end of ignorance, birth and death cease. He is the self-same One Who exists alone at the time of Creation and dissolution of this universe. There is naught higher than or different from Him. Rooted in His own glory, He stands alone without a second.

SCRIPTURAL TRUTHS: MORAL CODE:—Truth is universal and common property of all religions. It is not the monopoly of any Saint or nation. Non-essentials vary with time, place and circumstances but not the fundamental truths. All human beings are marching to one goal, though they may seem to walk along different and seemingly divergent paths. That what we hold dear and good for ourselves and which our inner voice approves, that we hold dear and good for others too. What we may not like for our own selves, for others also we like it not. He who feels as his own the joys, sufferings and sorrows of others, is a true Yogi. The life-giving breath of other beings is as dear to him as the breath of his own Self. Men gifted with intelligence and purified minds should always treat others as they themselves wish to be treated. They should refrain from fault-finding,

carping, lying, cavilling, back-biting, ill-natured criticism, scandal-mongering, malicious libelling, defaming, etc. People generally neglect their own fields but go to weed those of others. Conquer anger by kindness; malice by goodness; meanness by generosity; lying and deceit by truthfulness and frankness; vanity by humility; greed by contentment. If thy enemy is hungry, feed him; if he be thirsty, give him water; and thus heap coals of fire upon his head. Fight for the cause of women, children, the weak and the helpless. Be straight-forward yet mild; gentle yet dignified; strong yet untyrannical; energetic yet not arrogant; tolerant yet stern; mild yet firm; reverent yet complacent; considerate yet incisive; daring yet docile; discerning yet magnanimous; sincere yet resolute; just and yet courageous. Humility is the root of honour, lowliness is the foundation of loftiness; the world's weakest overcomes the world's strongest. Pride goeth before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall. The fear of God is the beginning of knowledge. Be religious but not bigoted; virtuous but not self-righteousness; devout but not fanatical. Gather wealth and honour without cruelty; enjoy without elation; speak gently and avoid cruelty; be brave but not boastful; be generous but never waste anything; always give with

discrimination; speak the truth boldly and avoid harshness; make friends but not with the ignoble; fight boldly for a right cause; seek information, but always from reliable sources. Serve your interests without injuring those of others; seek advice always from the wise; trust not the wicked; praise the virtues of others but not those of self; honour the worthy but not be proud of it; serve without deceit; propitiate without fawning; be clever but not out of reason; be gentle but not to the mischievous; and worship God without any display. Humility, unpretentiousness, non-injuriousness, forbearance, uprightness, service of the teacher, purity, steadiness, self-control; renunciation of sense-objects, absence of egoism, reflection on the evils of birth, death, old age, sickness, pain; non-attachment, non-identification of Self with son, wife, home and the rest, and constant even-mindedness in whatever happens — desirable or undesirable; unswerving devotion to God through the Yoga of non-separation; constant application to spiritual knowledge, true understanding of the end of the knowledge of Truth—these comprise true knowledge; whatever is opposed to these is ignorance.

He who hates not the appearance of light, activity or delusion (the outcome of the three

*Gun*as, viz., *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas* working in the mind) nor longs for them when absent; he who, sitting like one unconcerned, is not moved by the *Gun*as though he knows them to be operating; he who is self-centered and swerves not; alike in pleasure and pain, self-abiding, looking upon a clod of earth, a stone or a piece of gold alike; ever the same in agreeable and disagreeable circumstances; firm; indifferent to censure and praise, honour and dishonour, friend and foe, he whose intellect is unattached anywhere, who has subdued his heart, whose desires have fled, it is he who attains the Supreme Perfection of Freedom, i. e., he attains Brahman—the Supreme consummation of Knowledge.

(ii) JAINISM

Jainism preaches duality. It teaches that there are innumerable Souls in this universe and that every Soul is omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient. As a result of sins and impurity of the mind a *Jiva* (individual Soul) forgets Its Real Nature and this forgetfulness causes bondage and re-birth (birth, growth, decay and death). One suffers in this world for one's sins. To get rid of sins, one must practise purity in thought, word and deed. To attain Moksha (Freedom), or

in other words, to attain the original state of the Soul, there must be right belief, right knowledge and right conduct. Without these there can be no *Nirvana* and no *Moksha*. Wrong belief, wrong knowledge and wrong behaviour keep the Soul in bondage.

RIGHT FAITH; 1) Unshakable faith in the Jaina Scriptures.

- 2) Not to entertain any desire for sense-enjoyments.
- 3) To love and to show respect to the virtuous people.
- 4) To uphold Jainism, to guard it from the criticism of other people and to remove their misconceptions.
- 5) Not to recognise the authority of other creeds.
- 6) To meet the criticism of other creeds and to nullify its effects.
- 7) To remove the doubts of the wavering minds and to increase and intensify their faith in Jainism.
- 8) To love and respect the followers of Jainism.
- 9) To establish the glory of Jaina Scriptures.

RIGHT KNOWLEDGE; 1) *Parathamānu - Yoga*—which deals with *Dharma* (righteousness), *Artha* (wealth), *Kama* (desire and enjoyment), and *Moksha* (Freedom).

- 2) *Karananu-Yoga*—which enables one to perceive clearly the divisions of space, changes of time and the four conditions of life.
- 3) *Charanu-Yoga*—which deals with conduct.
- 4) *Dravyanu-Yoga*—which throws clear light on Tattvas, i. e., *Jiva*, *Ajiva*, virtue, vice, bondage and Freedom.

RIGHT CONDUCT: — is of two kinds, viz., perfect (*Sakala*) and *Vikala* (imperfect), the former is to be observed by the monks and the latter, by the householders. In right conduct are included the following: *Ahimsa* (non-killing and non-injury), *Satyam* (truthfulness), *Asteya* (non-stealing), *Brahmacharya* (celibacy), *Aparigraha* (non-covetousness), universal brotherhood, equality of all beings and practice of self-control. (These things must be practised in thought, word and deed.) A monk has to observe very strictly the following five things, i. e., not to kill but protect all life however small and insignificant it may be; not to utter falsehood; not to steal or to take anything that is not given to him; to observe strict *Brahmacharya* (celibacy) and lastly to renounce all mundane things.

Besides, Jainism preaches or asks its followers to practise *Daya* (mercy). Mercy is to be shown and practised in four ways, viz., i) Performance

of kind acts without any expectation in return and doing good work for its own sake. ii) Rejoicing at the prosperity of others. iii) Sympathy for the sufferings of others and all possible effort to mitigate them through service. iv) Sympathy for the wrong doers and the criminals.

JAINA ETHICS:— "*Ahimsa Paramo Dharma*" i.e., Non-killing and non-injury to all living beings is the highest kind of religion or Dharma. Non-attachment and dispassion are real Ahimsa (non-killing and non-injury); their disappearance is Himsa (injury). Control anger by forgiveness, pride or vanity by humility, deceit or fraud by frankness, and greed by self-control and contentment. One becomes a monk if one has the necessary equanimity of the mind; one becomes a Brahmana (wiseman) through celibacy, a Sage through wisdom and a hermit through penance. Attachment and aversion are caused by work (*Karma*) while delusion is the root-cause of work (*Karma*). Karma, in its turn, causes birth, growth, decay and death. Only when this Karma is overcome and destroyed by right belief, right knowledge and right conduct, does one attain eternal peace without any more worldly existence.

Jainism does not admit of a Creator or God. In place of God, Jainas worship the *Tirthankaras*—

the perfect Saints who preached Jainism. There are twenty-four Tirthankaras. The first being Rishiba and the last one Mahavira. Mahavira was the senior contemporary of *Buddha*. Apart from these Tirthankaras, the Jainas worship the *Arhats* (monks who have attained *Nirvana*). In fact, the Tirthankaras take the place of God in Jainism.

(iii) BUDDHISM

Of the four parts into which each Veda is divided, the Mantras, the Brahmanas and the Aranyakas can be grouped together as Karma-Kanda (rituals, Mantras, Yantras, Yagas and Yajnas), and the fourth Jnana-Kanda (philosophy) is generally kept apart. The Brahmins were the upholders or the guardians of the Vedas. In olden times, the Brahmins were the teachers and preceptors and, as such, they led a simple, pure life of renunciation and unselfishness. In other words simple living and high thinking was their motto in life. When the Brahmins led a pure and spotless life they progressed spiritually and the nation, under their spiritual guidance, prospered and progressed all-round. In due course, the country became sufficiently rich. The rich people grew averse to rigours of hard spiritual discipline and practice and began to use money freely to

gain, as it were, an easy passport to heaven. This offered a great lure and temptation to the Brahmins. In course of time, they began to lose sight of their ideal life and succumbed to the low mundane pleasures and, as was natural in the long run, they fell an easy prey to money and women. Thus they began to give great prominence to Yagas and Yajnas (sacrifices) whereby they could please the rich and earn plenty of money for themselves by the performance of Yajnas. The result was that the abstruse Jnana-Kanda (knowledge and philosophy) or the *Upanishads* gradually came to be totally neglected and Karma-Kanda gained undue prominence and millions of innocent animals came to be immolated as sacrifices everywhere. Time was now ripe for the advent of a great reformer to stem the evil customs and to uphold Dharma or righteousness. And this leader we find in the person of Gautama the Buddha. Buddha was born in 620 B.C. and died in 543 B.C. and preached pure Jnana-Kanda (rational religion). As the Brahmins were taking to sacrifices on the authority of the Vedas and gods Buddha safely avoided these two and when some of his disciples asked him, "Is there a God?", "Is there an Atman (Soul)?", "What is Nirvana?"—he kept scrupulously silent. And this silence was made the most

of by his followers after three hundred years of his Mahasamadhi (death). Buddha did not make or create a separate sect of his own. For about three hundred years, the followers of Buddha lived amicably, side by side, with the followers of Hinduism or the Vedic religion. But it was the Buddhist philosophers like Asvagosha and Nagarjuna who made Buddhism a separate sect, gave a separate philosophy to it and drifted it away from Hinduism. In due course, the clever Brahmins began to honour Buddha as one of the ten *Avataras* (Incarnations of God) and thereby reabsorbed Buddhism. In fact, Sri Shankara's Adwaita Philosophy and the preachings of the Buddha tally with each other to a very great extent. Buddha, like the strict followers of the Upanishads, had no faith in sacrifices and the external means to attain the Highest success in life (Nirvana). He accepted (meditation) as the right path to that end. He also accepted the life of perfect Brahmacharya (celibacy) as *sin qua non* of success as laid down in the Upanishads. When he commissioned his disciples to preach his Dharma (teachings), he advised them to preach pure Brahmacharya. Like Vedanta, Buddha accepts *Avidya* (nescience) and *Kama* (desire) as the root cause of suffering and bondage. Both

Buddha and Vedantins admit the necessity of release from bondage. Vedantins regard the world as an appearance while Buddha recognises it as *Vasana* (mental impression), as such, both take it to be false. The description of Nirvana by the Buddhists is as follows :—"Where water, earth, heat and air do not find a footing; where no light burns and the sun does not shine; where the moon does not shed her radiant beams but where darkness even does not exist. When a Sage, a Brahmana (Bhikkhu or monk), realises the Truth through silent concentration, he becomes free from form and formlessness, happiness and suffering." This explanation of Nirvana agrees with the description of Nirvikalpa Samadhi in Vedanta and Yoga.

But Buddha avoided the authority of the Vedas, whereas Shankara revitalized the Upanishads or the Jnana-Kanda of the Vedas and reconverted Buddhists enmasse. As a result of these conversions and the conquest of India by the Mussalmans and the destruction of the Buddhist monastries by them, Buddhism came to be completely rooted-out of its birth place, and survived only in Ceylon, Burma, Siam, China, Japan and Tibet.

PREACHINGS OF THE BUDDHA :— The Buddha prescribes eight modes of right living (the eight-fold-path :—1) Right belief ; 2) Right aim; 3) Right speech; 4) Right action; 5) Right livelihood; 6) Right endeavour; 7) Right mindfulness and 8) Right meditation. In these lies the way for the attainment of Nirvana and the conquest of misery.

Abstaining from lying, slandering, abuse and gossip is called right speech. Non-killing, non-stealing and abstaining from unlawful sexual-intercourse is called right action. To abstain from trading in arms, in living beings, in flesh, in intoxicating drinks and poison, and to abstain from deceit, treachery, sooth-saying, trickery and usury is called right livelihood. *Dasa Kausala Karma* or ten meritorious actions, are: Abstention from killing, stealing, fornication, lying, abuse, slander, gossip, greed, hatred and delusion.

In five ways should a clansman minister to his friends and acquaintances: by generosity, courtesy, benevolence, by treating them as he treats himself and by being as good as his word. He who successfully fulfils his vow of continence in body and in mind, and achieves the final knowledge, he alone acquires the right, high Brahma and is in a position to declare to others

to follow the path; he may give to himself the name of Brahmana.

QUOTATIONS FROM DHAMMAPADA :— 1. If a man speaks or acts with a sullied consciousness, sufferings follow him, even as the wheel of a wagon follows the hoof of the bullock.

2. If a man speaks or acts with an unsullied consciousness, happiness follows him everywhere and ever like his shadow.

3. Never in this world can hatred be stilled by hatred; it can be stilled only by non-hatred—this is the Eternal Law.

4. As a stormy blast lays low an unfirm tree, so does the Evil One (Mara) overpower him who lives in the pursuit of pleasures, guards not his senses, is not moderate in eating, is indolent and whose energy is dissipated.

5. As a stormy blast cannot prevail against a rocky mountain, so cannot the Evil One (Mara) prevail against the man who lives not in the pursuit of pleasures, guards well his senses, is moderate in eating, is possessed of unflinching faith and who conserves his energy.

6. Just as monsoon rains penetrate a house that is ill-thatched, so does lust enter the uncollected mind; it cannot enter the mind which is collected.

7. Both in this world and the next, the evil doer laments—he grieves and suffers in the visualization of his sinful deeds.

8. If a heedless man comes up and recites the Sacred Texts but does not act up to their teachings, he is like unto a cowherd who simply counts the cows of others; he does not and cannot share the life of a Bhikkhu.

9. Wakefulness is the way to immortality; heedlessness, to death.

10. Only the wise ones who are ever meditative and are ever putting forth strong effort do attain Nirvana.

11. Pass not thy time in heedlessness, nor foster a desire for the pleasures of the senses.

12. Let a wise man keep a strict watch over his mind and restrain and control it; a mind thus subjugated is conducive to happiness.

13. A man of unsteady mind who knows not the true doctrine and whose serenity is ruffled can never gain perfect knowledge.

14. Neither father, nor mother nor kindred can confer greater benefits than those accruing from a well-directed mind.

15. Let not a man heed the perversities of others; let him attend to what he himself has done amiss, and what he has left undone.

16. Like unto a lovely flower of exquisite colour, but lacking fragrance, are the fair words of him who acts not up to them.

17. A fool is deceived into thinking that an unworthy deed is as sweet as honey but the delusion lasts as long as it bears no fruit; when it ripens, he is undeceived and suffers.

18. Wise men never appear elated in happiness or depressed in suffering; they are unmoved by praise or censure.

19. Victory over oneself is far better than that over others.

20. Let a man make haste in doing good, let him keep his mind off sin; for if he is slow in doing good, his mind would delight in sin.

21. Whosoever offends a man who is harmless, pure and free from unworthy tendencies, on him will the evil recoil, as the fine dust does when tossed against the wind.

22. All tremble before the rod, all fear death, putting oneself in the position of another, one should neither strike nor slay.

23. Let each man make himself that which he instructs others to be.

24. Himself well controlled, one can control others easily and well.

25. It is very easy to do that which is not good and may be hurtful to oneself but exceedingly hard to do the reverse.

26. Purity and impurity depend on one's own self.

27. Patience is the greatest penance and long-suffering the highest Nibbana.

28. There is no fire like lust; no moral breach like ill-will; no suffering like existence through the five groups (Khandhas) and there is no bliss like Nibbana (Highest Peace).

29. A man will always be surely happy if he escapes the sight of fools.

30. Well-controlled indeed are those wise men who have mastery over the body, the tongue and the mind.

31. An unchaste life is the worst blot on a woman; miserliness is the worst short-coming of the liberal-minded; unworthy tendencies are the root of all evil in this world and the next; but the worst and the most heinous of all stains is the stain of ignorance.

32. Very easy is the life for a man who is shameless and impudent like a crow; who sacrifices the interests of others, indulges in excesses, is boastful and leads a corrupt life; but a crown

of thorns adorns one who leads a pure, modest and honest life.

33. It is very easy to discover and point out flaws in others; one's own are neither noticed nor even suspected.

34. Guard ye your speech, clothe ye well your mind, and do no wrong with the body; these are the avenues of action which should be first purified and then should one try to tread the Path taught by the Sages of old.

35. From contemplation (Yoga) springs Wisdom, from the lack of it, the decay of Wisdom.

36. The good shine from afar like the Himalayan range; those lacking in virtue vanish unseen, as arrows shot in a dark night.

37. Four things befall a reckless man who mixes with the wife of another—loss of merit, no comfort in sleep, blame and hell.

38. Renounce all that lies in the future; give up all that is past; surrender the present and cross to the other shore.

39. With a mind entirely freed of desires, you can escape the wheel of births and deaths.

40. Craving ever grows from more to more in a mortal who is torn by doubts, longs intensely for the delights of passion and whose regard for

material pleasures alone is unlimited. Such a one indeed tightens his own fetters.

41. Rouse thyself by thyself, examine thyself by thyself (connect thyself with Self); a Bikkhu thus self-protected and mindful can live happily.

42. Self is the Lord of Self—It is the Goal of Self; therefore, control thyself as one does a horse of a noble breed.

(iv) ZOROASTRIANISM

The founder of Zoroastrianism was Zarathushtra. His original name was Spitama and he lived in Iran (Persia) about 1000 B.C. In Zoroastrianism, God is called Ahura Mazda and the Evil Spirit or Satan is called Ahriman. Its followers worship fire because to them fire represents God. They consider it to be the most sacred and the true symbol of God. Fire is regarded as the son of Ahura Mazda (God). They believe that fire has two qualities, viz., it changes everything which comes into contact with it and secondly its smoke rises upwards. These two things symbolize purity and virtuous life. But it is not the ordinary fire that they worship. By special contrivances they get fire from lightning which is kept alive. They make fire altars in their temples and keep and feed this fire alive by sandal wood.

In the early part of the 10th century, the followers of Zoroastrianism were persecuted and massacred by the Mohammadans and the whole sect left Iran and fled to India in the year 936 A.D. Here they were given shelter by the Hindus. The followers of Zoroastrianism are now called *Parsis* and their total population in India is 1,25,000. The Parsis built their first fire-altar at Udwarda about eighty miles north of Bombay more than ten centuries ago.

AHURA MAZDA (God) :--Ahura Mazda is the Supreme Lord of the universe. He is the Greatest, the Strongest, the Best, the most Brilliant, the most Majestic and the most Holy, and He is the Creator of this universe. He is changeless, just, merciful and beneficent. He is the Creator, Protector, Knower and the Watcher. All that is good comes from Ahura Mazda and all that is evil comes from Ahriman. The commandments to the followers of Zoroastrianism are: 1) Know God as One only ;

2. Know the Prophet Zoroaster as the true representative of Ahura Mazda;

3. Have perfect faith in the religion and in the Scripture (Zend Avesta);

4. Have unswerving faith in the goodness of Ahura Mazda;

5. Never to disregard and disobey the teachings of Zoroastrianism;

6. To avoid all evil actions and instead always to perform virtuous deeds;

7. To pray five times a day. To use or face some bright object like the sun or any other light while praying and worshipping God (Ahura Mazda);

8. To have perfect faith in the justice of Ahura Mazda, and the fourth morning after death (the day of judgement);

9. To fear hell and to exert for the attainment of heaven; and

10. To believe with full faith that Ahura Mazda has done what He willed and shall do what He Wills (complete self-surrender to God).

TEACHINGS:—Man is responsible for his thoughts, words and deeds. The individual intellect and will are connected with the Cosmic intellect and will. The goal of life is to attain Eternal happiness and this can be gained through the Compassion and Grace of Ahura Mazda. This Compassion one can get by leading a holy life, i.e., pure thoughts, pure words and pure acts. Holiness is happiness and this happiness is nothing but a gift of Ahura Mazda, and to offer one's holiness and happiness to Ahura Mazda is the

highest kind of offer. To attain holiness one must live a pure life, observe strictly the moral and ethical code of conduct, perform one's duty well, live in peace and harmony with one's fellowmen, and be kind and charitable. By charitable works and by giving alms to the poor, the sick, the needy and the helpless, one can easily atone for one's sins. One must always practise truthfulness, hospitality, chastity, honesty, kindness to all, obedience to parents and one should shun lying, hypocrisy, greed, negligence, indolence, disbelief in religion, arrogance, violence, vanity, jealousy, malice, etc. Those who are pure and holy reach heaven after death and live in the Abode of Ahura Mazda while the wicked go to hell. So, let all men practice good to others, i.e., never do unto others what is not good unto one's own self. Poverty through honesty is far better than riches by unfair means. Righteousness is a much higher kind of acquisition than riches of the whole world. The essence of religion is Truth. Desire for respect and reverence hinder spiritual life and growth, so shun them at all costs. Health is wealth. Wisdom, contentment, faith, virtue, piety and honesty are the real riches and the greatest treasures on earth. To commit no sin is preferable to repentance. Time ill spent is life

wasted away. Time cannot be brought or recalled. It is more precious than anything else; therefore, one should make the best use of it. Truth is the same for all. It knows no racial boundary. It always wins in the long run but untruth can never.

(v) SIKHISM

Guru Nanak is the founder of Sikhism and he lived in the middle of the 15th century. Under the Muslim rule, the Hindus were persecuted and many were converted by force. Sindh and the Punjab were dominated by the Mohammdans and the Hindu minority was dwindling away as a result of forceful conversions by the Muslims. At this critical juncture, Guru Nanak appeared on the scene as a Saviour to the Hindus. Guru Nanak and his nine descendants (Gurus) along with their followers had to face the Muslim rulers with a brave heart. Many had even to sacrifice their lives. Often they had to fight them also. In olden times, the Hindus did not care to reconvert their unhappy and miserable brethren who had been forcibly converted to the Muslim faith under most untoward circumstances. Even when time favoured them and when those converted people were keen on coming back to their own

fold, the Hindus were unwilling to absorb them. The bigotted Brahmins stood against the reconversion of these helpless people. As a result, Hinduism lost in strength of numbers. Guru Nanak did not care for the Brahmins and for the prevailing castes. He gave a safe burial to all such silly sentiments. He preached Truth. He preached oneness of the Supreme God and asked his followers to have infinite faith in God and in Guru. He took in his fold people from different castes. He reconverted all those Hindus who had been forcefully converted to Islam and who wanted to come back to the Hindu religion. Though the religion preached by Guru Nanak and his nine descendants is nothing but a version of Hinduism (a mixture of Jnana and Bhakti, viz., knowledge and devotion); yet, as a challenge to the hypocrited and bigotted Brahmins, he had to form a separate sect. And to that sect he gave the name of Sikhs. Had it not been for the heroic stand and great sacrifices of the great Sikh Gurus, Hinduism would have been completely wiped out of existence in Sindh and the Punjab. At present, Sikhism has a following of about 4,325,000, people. They have their main temple at Amritsar (the Golden Temple) and worship Guru

Grantha Sahib (the teachings of the ten Gurus). This book is an authority on Sikhism and is considered to be most holy and treated as if the Gurus were actually living in it in flesh and blood. It is invariably covered with a piece of silken cloth, is kept at an elevated place in Gurudwaras and other places and is worshipped with flowers, Prasad, and in deep reverence.

TEACHINGS:—The Ultimate Truth is One only without a second and It is called Brahman or God. God is Formless, Eternal, Infinite, Changeless, All-pervading and ever the same. The word "Om" represents the name of the Supreme God. The world is nothing but a delusion caused by Maya. In reality, there is, has been and will ever be the Supreme Being only. There is no difference between the Supreme Being and the individual Soul; in essence, they are the same. Have firm faith in God and the Guru, surrender unto God everything you have. Give up the ego idea. Lead a pure and holy life. Love and serve every being as your own self. Work for work's sake and never expect any reward or fruit of the action. Offer sincere prayers to God. One can win the grace and mercy of God by sincere, ardent prayers and by complete self-surrender to His Will. Practice humility. Without devotion to God,

life itself is in vain and search for the Eternal is futile. Those who have fixed their mind in God have done their duty and they shall enjoy eternal life. The substance of life is God's Name. His Name purifies the heart and bestows Freedom. Cultivate devotion to God and meditate on His Name. O Man ! never forget God, believe in Him, sing His greatness and fill your heart with pure love unto Him. Greediness is a dog, falsehood is a scavenger and food by illicit earnings is like filth. Eat little, sleep little, but practice love, mercy and forbearance in abundance. The best kind of devotion is to take God's Name and the highest kind of duty is to repeat the name of God always. Follow Truth at all costs. Avoid hypocrisy and lip-service. Contentment is the greatest happiness, forgiveness and mercy, the greatest virtues, while greed is the greatest evil. Make mercy, contentment, celibacy and Truth your own, establish yourself firmly in these Divine qualities, exercise self-control and your life will be a blessed one. The whole world is full of beggars and a man who looks after human support goes to hell. There is but One Giver; therefore, always depend upon Him. He who renounces the world and ceases to love it can love and serve God. Be kind to all, for all have the same life.

(vi) TAOISM

Taoism was founded by Lao-Tze born in China in the yer 604 B.C. Lao-Tze was the senior contemporary of Confucius. In China, Lao-Tze and Confucius preached their doctrines while in India, Mahavira and Buddha preached theirs and in Greece, Socrates preached his philosophy. Thus five great men of the world lived side by side in the same century. Lao-Tze was a state historian and a keeper of the secret archives in the Royal Court of Chorc.

Taoism admits reward and punishment after death. It also admits rebirth or reincarnation of the Soul and Its immortality.

TEACHINGS:—Tao means the Supreme Being and It is only One. It was in the beginning and It shall be for ever. It is Eternal, Formless, Nameless, Immutable and Omnipresent. It cannot be perceived by the senses and It cannot be described. The Tao cannot be heard—whatever may be heard is not the Tao. The Tao cannot be seen—whatever can be seen is not the Tao. In words the Tao cannot be expressed—what can thus be expressed is not the Tao. The Formless gives a form of its own to everything; we cannot know It as void of Form. The Nameless gives every name its name;

It Itself may not be named but by all names. See the Tao in yourself and you know everything else. The holy man recognises unity in diversity and multiplicity in unity. The One is eternally unchangeable. Great Heaven is Intelligence, and It is with you in all your goings. Great Heaven is clear seeing; and is with you in your wanderings and indulgences. What you call the Supreme Being (Tao), where is It? There is nowhere where It is not. Heaven hears a man's private conversation as plainly as thunder. Tao is the Primal cause from which the whole universe comes into existence, and all things depend on It for life. Whatever is opposed to the Tao soon perishes. The Tao has Its root in Itself only.

ETHICS :— Purity, humility, contentment, compassion, kindness, self-control and concentration are the means for the attainment of the Tao. Recompense injury with kindness. Do not accumulate, do not plan, do not make a show of yourself, (do not be egoistic), do not boast, treat equally all the pairs of opposites such as gain and loss, honour and disgrace, etc. Sincere words are not fine; fine words are not sincere. Those who know do not speak and those who speak, do not know. Be gentle, and you can be bold; be frugal and you can be liberal, cultivate

humility and you can become a leader among men. There is no greater sin than yielding to desire, no greater misery than discontentment and no greater calamity than the desire to acquire. He who conquers others is strong, but he who controls himself is mighty. Wherever there is attachment, there is bondage. Where there is no bondage there is happiness. Always accumulate virtue. Treat all with love and gentleness. Respect your elders and the aged, and love all younger to you. Be dutiful. Do not injure any living being. Always be compassionate to orphans and widows. Men punish those who do evil openly; but God punishes those who do evil secretly. Those who fear both men and God, are fit to walk alone. Promote goodness. Renounce much and accept little. Do not see the faults of others. Blessed is the man who always speaks what is good. Birth is not a beginning, and death is not an end. There is existence without limitation. To a still mind, or to a controlled mind the whole universe surrenders and such a man attains the Tao. There must be sincerity to gain Him.

(vii) CONFUCIANISM

Confucianism was founded by Confucius who was born in China in the year 551 B.C. The

original name of Confucius was Kung-fu-tse but the European scholars who found it difficult to pronounce the Chinese name properly, gave him a Latin name and called him Confucius. Kung-fu-tse means statesman, philosopher Kung. After completing his education Confucius secured a job and acted as an accountant of the granary for the Chi family in the state of Lu. He was very hard-working, honest, methodical and a great disciplinarian. At the age of fifty, he became the minister of works and chief justice and later on he was appointed as the governor of Chung Tu district. His administration was so very successful that, after a year, he was made the prime minister of the state. As the prime minister, he brought about great changes among the people who became loyal, faithful, truthful, chaste and honest. This marvellous change among the people and the success of Confucius created fear and jealousy in the heart of Marquis of Chi and as a result of his manoeuvrings, Confucius had to leave his post and to flee from Lu. He then took up a life of wandering and travelled from state to state preaching his doctrine for thirteen years. He made a large number of followers and left his mortal coil at the age of seventy-three in the year 448 B.C.

TEACHINGS:— Confucius insisted upon his followers to cultivate ethics, viz., loyalty, truthfulness, benevolence, charity, chastity, magnanimity, sincerity, kindness, goodness, purity of heart and good character. He strained every nerve in giving moral training to people and laid special stress on cultivation of ethical virtues. He says:—Learning without thought is labour lost, and thought without learning is perilous. To be poor without murmuring is difficult, but it is easy to be rich without pride. Commit no excess; do nothing injurious; there are few who will not take you for their pattern. Seek to be in harmony with all your neighbours; live in unity with your brothers. Consult your own heart, if you are in doubt. In every heart there dwelleth a sage; only man does not steadfastly believe and trust it. Therefore, have it remained buried. The Great God has conferred the moral sense on even the lowliest people. What the undeveloped man seeks is things apart; what the advanced man seeks is *himself*. Do not do to others as you would not like to be done to yourself. The will should never be gratified to the full; pleasures should never be carried to excess. Every man must guard his words and watch his conduct. One must leave off all mean things and take to dignity, reverence, loyalty, faithfulness,

one must practise what is right and love learning and virtue. When righteousness is sincerely practised the heart becomes purified and the mind frees itself from self-deception. Always observe the following three things—Awe for Heaven's decree; Awe for great men; and awe for Saint's words. While worshipping God, actually feel the Divine presence in the object of worship. The world is only a halting place. By controlling the anger of a moment you may avoid the sorrows of a life-time. Blame yourself as you would blame others. Excuse others as you would excuse yourself. Obedience is better than reverence. Sincerity is the way to God. He who does not know the Divine Law cannot become a wise man. He who does not know the rules of right conduct cannot form his character. The Enlightened are free from doubt, the virtuous are free from anxiety, and the brave are free from fear. Noise is not in the market place, nor is quietude in the forest; it is in the heart only. Better do kind acts near home than travel thousands of miles to burn incense and to worship. The enlightened mind is its own heaven and the unenlightened mind is its own hell.

(viii) SHINTOISM

Shintoism implies the national faith, the religion, the patriotic spirit, the national culture, the creative principle of life, code of ethics, arts, and family guidance of the Japanese nation. Before the advent of Buddhism, Shintoism prevailed all over Japan. To a great extent the preachings of Hinduism and Shintoism tally. According to Shintoism there is One Supreme God and there are many gods also under that One Being.

TEACHINGS:— The first Japanese Emperor and his dynasty are considered to be the descendants of God. As such, every subject is expected to show absolute loyalty to the Emperor. All must bear respect for ancestors, love and regard towards parents and love for children. All must be pure and sincere in thought, word and deed. A man who is sincere, pure and ardently offers prayers attains God-realization. Irrespective of nationality, language, manners, and culture, men should give mutual aid, and enjoy reciprocal, peaceful pleasure by showing in their conduct that they are brethern. This universe is the body of God. The Law (heavenly Reason) exists and acts in every quarter of the universe as the expres-

sion of Eternal Vitality. The heavens are still; there is no sound. Where than shall God be found? Search not in distant skies, in man's own heart He lies. Do not transgress the will of gods. Do not offend the state by violating laws. Do not doubt the absolute goodness of the gods. Do not forget that you have your own limitations. Do not be angry. Be diligent in work. By sincere prayers you can attain God-realization. Where there is sincerity, there is virtue and where there is virtue, there is knowledge. To do good is to be pure and to commit evil is to be impure. Conquest of self is the root of benevolence. Virtue and happiness always go side by side. See no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil and do no evil. Evil deeds recoil on the doer. Forbearance is the basis of contentment and a very precious thing. Follow implicitly the commands of your parents, instructions of your teachers and be straight forward in heart. Do not utter falsehood. Be diligent in study. To see justice and fail to do it is nothing but cowardice. Give up pride and practice kindness to one and all. So long as a man's mind is established in truthfulness, the gods will protect him even though he may not pray.

(ix) ISLAM

Before the advent of Islam, Arabia was in chaos and without any proper religion. Polytheism and idolatry were rampant all over the land. A large number of Arabs worshipped stones. Though in Medina and Mecca Judaism and Christianity existed, they had no stronghold over the people. There had been no cultural life in the whole country. Drinking, gambling, debauchery, infanticide, human sacrifices to the idols, and the sons inheriting father's wives as their own (except the mother) were the common evils of the day. At this juncture, the advent of a great spiritual leader was the greatest need of the land and this leader we find in the person of Mohammad. Mohammad was born on 20th. April, 571 A.D. in Mecca and he is the founder of Islam. The holy book of Islam is called the Quran and it is considered to be very sacred by every Mohammadan.

TEACHINGS:— Mohammad preached the unity of God, love of God, respect for elders and parents, reverence to women, and leading a good moral life. He said that every good act was an act of charity. No man is a true believer unless he desires for his brother that which he desires for

himself. All beings hail from God and they should be treated as members of one's own family. Feed the hungry, visit the sick, free the captive, do good to all creatures, help the oppressed, and love your fellow beings. Do not injure any living being. Do not take intoxicating drinks, avoid evil, always practise virtue, be straightforward and frank. Be kind to the poor and the weak, give charity, be pure in thought, word and deed, and keep sincere prayers. Allah (God) is the protector of the universe. He is all-merciful. He is the Supreme Judge and metes out justice to individuals according to their merits and demerits. No man should take arms except for self-defence. No one can be called a Mussalman unless he practises tolerance and accepts the essential truths of all other religions as true. All those who tyrannize over and persecute people of other faiths will be punished by God. Every religion is true and a true Mussalman must be always tolerant. Abuse none, despise not anything good, speak to thy brethern with an open countenance. Do not abuse the dead, for thereby you would hurt the living. Looking lustfully is the adultery of the eye. The adultery of the ears is hearing what is wrong, that of the tongue is speaking what is wrong, that of the hands is seizing wrongfully, that of

the feet is walking with unlawful intents. Avarice and evil disposition are incompatible with true belief in a Momin (Believer). Cleanliness is one-half of the faith. God is pure, generous, beneficent and He loves people who are such. The man in whom there is no sin, no transgression, no grudge and no envy can only be called pure and pious. Faith and envy cannot dwell together in the heart of a servant of God. Envy eats up goodness as fire eats up fuel. Forgive him who wrongs thee; join him who cuts thee off; do good to him who does evil to thee; and speak the truth although it be against thyself. Greed is poverty and to have no desires is riches. A man who has given up all desires is independent. Never tell a lie, never fail to keep your promise, and never play false when trusted. Faith is a restraint against all violence; let no Momin (Believer) commit violence. Of all men, the people who have faith abstain the most from killing. Fear the prayers of the wronged, for, verily, there is no evil between him and God. Happy is the servant of God whom He has made a key to goodness and a bolt to evil. Whosoever has even an atom of pride in his heart shall not enter paradise. Everything is from God; there is no beauty in this world that is not His beauty; there is no love in

the heart of man that is not a breath of His love. There is no God, in truth, other than God. He is the first and He is the last also. He is the outer form and expression of everything, and He is the inner too. He is the manifest and he is the unmanifest also. Both good and evil come from God. He who has known himself has known God and he who forgeteth God forgets Himself.

(x) S U F I S M

Sufism has Islam for its origin. And its teachings tally with those of Hinduism, especially Vedanta. In other words, this system is only an effort to harmonise and unite Islam and Hinduisim.

This movement was started by Prince Dhara Shikoh, the Ist. son of Emperor Shahjahan who ruled in India from 1629 A. D. to 1659 A.D. Prince Dhara Shikoh was assassinated by his younger brother Aurangazeb in the year 1659 A.D. and since then this movement remained in secrecy. Sufism has produced many great Saints. The Sufi Saints are liberal minded and they believe in God with form and without form also. A Sufi Mystic sees God everywhere and in every object. He tries to renounce everything and to give up lust, greed, egosim, anger and pride and to practise perfect self-control and to lead an

ascetic life. Later Hazarat Inayat Khan who was born in Baroda (India) in the year 1882 A.D. brought Sufism into light and he preached it in Europe in the year 1910 A.D.

TEACHINGS:— The world is but a forgetfulness of God. It is neither spouse nor child, neither silver nor gold. Whoever from this world has turned his face away, is not lost; instead, he has found his long-forgotten and lost-Self again. He that is far away from God can only say God is somewhere; for him who has found the locked one in himself, God is neither He, nor Thou, but I. All Prophets of all times and all climes have been sent by the Supreme Self, for one purpose alone, namely, that they teach men serve the Supreme Self and none else. Verily, the 'I' —Self — is God; none other than the Supreme Self is God. The wise see good and evil both as God's and so they draw their hearts away from both and fix them on the Master of the two. What a wonder that a Being colourless displays thousands of colours ! What a wonder that a Being without Form enrobs Himself in countless forms ! May we behold Him in all colours and forms ! The mind-stream flows in two rival currents leading to vice and virtue. The mind that finds the path and rises above the three things that

bind, viz., knowledge, desire and act, knows no fear and for It all do's and don'ts end. He who findeth God becomes God Himself and for such a man there is no separate God. Separation, difference, exclusiveness are the characteristics of the animal mind. The spirit of Oneness indicates the mind of man. If you find God, you find everything. If you find the Creator, can His creation be left behind? Is anyone separate from the any other? Thou art Thyself, the Thinker and this world. God has placed a touchstone in every heart and it always separates what is false from what is true. God is beyond all thought, conception, guess, imagination, and far beyond all that we have spoken, heard and read in books. He is the Subject of all. Prayer carries us half-way to God; fasting takes us to the door of His palace while charity admits us into His parlour. Wrong not and you shall not be wronged. Be kind to your parents, relatives, orphans and the poor. Give alms and be steadfast in your prayers. God is the first and the last, the seen and the unseen. He Knows all things. Wherever you are, He is with you there. God Knows all that is in heaven and on earth. Verily, we come from God and to Him we return in the end. Do good, because God loves those who do good.

(xi) JUDAISM

Judaism is the religion of the Jews, and the old Testament. (The Bible is made up of the old and the new Testaments. Of these the old Testament represents the Scripture of the Jews while the new Testament that of the Christians. As Rishi Manu is the Indian Law Giver, so is Moses the Law Giver of the Jews and Christians). The Jews believe in the doctrine of Immortality, resurrection of the Soul, future life in heaven or in hell, existence of angels and spirits, unity, holiness and incorporeality of God and in Satan (the Evil Spirit).

TEACHINGS:—God is the Creator of the universe and the Father of all creation. He is just and merciful. He is without wickedness. Man's fate depends upon prayer with a travail heart and repentance. Honour thy father and mother. Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his men or maid servants, nor his ox, ass, nor anything that is your neighbours. Sufferings constitute a path of life and atone for more than sacrifice. The body is the

scabbard of the Soul. He who glances in lust even at the corner of a woman's heel commits adultery with her. All the wickedness is but little to the wickedness of a woman (committing adultery). God did neither make a woman from man's head that she should rule over him; nor from his feet that she should be his slave; but from his side that she should be near his head. He gives little who gives much with a frown; and he gives much who gives little with a smile. He that gives should never remember; and he that receives should never forget. If one walks towards God even one cubit, God runs towards him twain. He who denies his guilt doubles it. Answer with patience and let thy life be sincere. The best preacher is the heart; the best teacher is time; the best book is the world; and the best friend is God.

(xii) CHRISTIANITY

About 2000 years ago Judasim fell down from its ideal. The degenerate Priests misinterpreted the Scriptures and misguided the people. Temples were used for money breeding, bargaining, buying and selling. At this critical time the advent of a great religious reformer was the

greatest need of the time to guide the people into right channels of conduct. And this leader we find in the person of Jesus, the Christ. Jesus was born at Bethlehem to Joseph and Mary. Joseph was a carpenter and a Palestine Jew. The preachings of Jesus were repugnant to the wishes of the hypocrite priests who brought false charges against him and, in the end, managed to get him crucified. Thus, Jesus sacrificed his life for the sake of Dharma (righteousness). But he left behind him twelve disciples to carry on his work. These disciples, too had to suffer great hardships; all the same, they had unshakable faith in the Messiah and in his teachings and carried and spread the message of their beloved Master far and wide. The teachings of Jesus, the Christ are labelled as Christianity.

TEACHINGS:— Repent; for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. Blessed are the pure in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they who do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peace-makers,

for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you and persecute you and shall say all manners of evil against you falsely for my sake. You have heard that it was said by them of old times, Thou shalt not kill—But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the Judgement; and whosoever shall say to his brother *Raca*, shall be in danger of the Council: But whosoever shall say Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire. Therefore, if thou bringest thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother and then come and offer thy gift. Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery. But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. Swear not at all; neither by heaven, for it is God's throne: neither by earth for it is His foot stool. Resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. If any man will sue thee at

the law and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them who despitefully use you, and persecute you. When thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory for men. When thou doest alms let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth. When thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are, but thou shalt enter thy closet and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father. Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt and where thieves do not break through and steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. Have no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, what ye shall drink and what ye shall put on. Is not life more than meat and body more than raiment ? Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye,

but considerest not the beam that is in thy own eye ? Give not that which is holy unto the dog, neither cast ye pearls before swine, lest they tremple them under their feet and turn again and rend you. Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. Sin no more; one sin begets another. The Voice of the people is the Voice of God. It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God. Good deeds are the best prayers. Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Better an ounce of mercy than a pound of gold to the church. In God we live, and move and have our beings, for we are also His offspring. Behold the Kingdom of God is within you. Heaven and hell are in your heart. A good conscience is God's Voice.

OUR CONCLUSIONS

In the foregoing pages we have dealt with the different religions of the world and, for a ready grasp, have quoted freely the gist of their sayings and preachings as given in their Scriptures. We shall, in this chapter, try to summarise, collate and compare these teachings to arrive at certain obvious conclusions. No effort need be wasted, however, to see that all the Scriptures of the world agree in the following fundamental conceptions:—

1. That there is a Supreme Being who is called God, the Ultimate Truth or Brahman.

2. That God, is *Saguna* (with form) and *Nirguna* also (formless).

3. That God is Eternal, Infinite, Unchangeable, All-pervading, Immovable, Birthless, Growthless, Decayless, Deathless, Sexless, Omnipotent, Omnipresent, Omniscient and One only without a second.

4. That God is the Cause of this universe; it is His infinite Power or Shakti that evolves as

Spirit, mind, matter and this great phenomenon of the Universe.

5. That there is a Self or Soul or Atman or Jiva or Consciousness in every living being, which is the cause of life.

6. That the Self is the ruler of a living body and Its instruments of thought and action are: mind, intellect (*Buddhi*), will, ego, mind-stuff (*Chitta*), and the five gross and five subtle senses.

7. That the impurity of the mind is the cause of ignorance, bondage and suffering while its purity leads to Moksha or Freedom. — Lust, anger, greed, infatuation, pride, hatred, attachment, jealousy, lying, stealing, selfishness, debauchery, swindling, hypocrisy, etc., in thought, word and deed are the causes of sin; these sins make the mind impure, and this impurity of the mind, in its turn, makes one forget one's own Real Nature.

8. That when a being observes purity in thought, word and deed and cultivates good qualities, like truthfulness, kindness, love for all beings, charity, unselfishness, celibacy, non-stealing, non-killing and cleanliness, and worships God and shows reverence to and serves his parents, teacher (*Guru*), the sick, the needy, the

elders and the venerable people and practises self-control, self-discipline, *Japa* (repeating of God's Name), meditation, concentration, prayer, etc., he gains purity of mind for God-realization and Freedom.

9. That incarnation, rebirth and *Karma-phala* (cause and effect, action and reaction, work and its fruit) are irrevocable for all human beings in general. What one sows that one reaps. We are what our past desires, thoughts and acts have made us. What we think that we become.—So, man is the sole cause and maker of his joys and sufferings and not God.—That is why so much inequality prevails in this world.

10. That there is some form of caste in every religion, country and sect.

Now, we shall take these points up one by one and throw light on them:—

1. GOD:— All the different Scriptures of the world unanimously proclaim the existence of God. These Scriptures are the words of the men of Wisdom-men who were pure, holy and perfect and who had come in direct contact with or had realised that Supreme Truth after attaining Samadhi. They do not deny God-realization to any man or woman. On the contrary, the way is left open to each and every-one, provided he or she follows

the prescribed path. The existence of God is not a fiction, not a creation of the weak and the ignorant out of fear. In fact, a coward, weak or ignorant man has no religion, much less can he aspire to God-realization. True religion can be practised and God-realization achieved only by a true hero or heroine. Experience also clearly proves the existence of God. God is actually more real than anything else. Something can never come out of nothing and that something out of which the whole universe has come out is called God. Some imbeciles think that the universe has been born of blind force and matter. Such an idea is nothing but rank stupidity, the outcome of ignorance. How can unintelligent and blind nature, force and matter produce conscious and intelligent beings ? Can machinery like trains, motor cars, aeroplanes, etc., run or ply by themselves without the intelligence of man ? Besides, if we study the various forms of life from plant to human, we realise how intelligent, harmonious and systematic the entire process is. The truth is that matter cannot work such wonders, much less produce intelligent beings and conscious life.

Even a silly man who denies God cannot deny himself. He can never deny his own life and Consciousness. What proof does a man need to be

able to say that *he* exists, *his intellect* exists, *he lives* and *feels*, etc.? It is nothing but rank foolishness if for lack of proper understanding, one denies God and suffers hell-fire. The inner-most Voice, the pure Consciousness in every life is God. When we say that God is All-pervading, it implies conclusively that there is not a single thing in which God is not. God is everywhere and He is in everything. He is the Ocean of Consciousness by Itself or in Itself. As such, the inner-most Being, the pure Consciousness in every being and in every life is God. Nothing can exist apart from God. If anything can exist apart from God, the epithets—God is All-pervading or Eternal; Infinite, etc., become meaningless.

2. THE FORMS OF GOD:—God is *Saguna* (with form) and *Nirguna* (formless) also. God has form and yet He has no form also. As an example, let us take vapour. Ordinarily, we cannot see vapour with naked eyes. But when that subtle vapour coming in contact with cold breeze becomes cooler and grosser it appears as cloud, rain, snow and so on. Subtle vapour thus assumes various forms. Likewise, God takes multifarious forms according to the devotion of His devotees. A devotee's pure and intense love condenses; as it were, that Formless aspect of God and gives It a shape. And God

gives His Darshan (Vision) to His devotee in the form the latter desires. Again, when the same devotee goes into Nirvikalpa Samadhi, he experiences the Formless aspect of God. These are bare facts which can be experienced by each and every person only if he follows the right path.

3. THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD:—The highest conception of God by human mind is Sat-Chit-Ananda or Existence, Knowledge and Bliss absolute. Even this conception is nothing but a limitation of the Unlimited. Yet there is no other way. God is All-pervading, Eternal, Infinite, Unchangeable, Immovable, Birthless, Growthless, Decayless, Deathless and Sexless. He is the Cause of all causes, Life of all lives, the Subject of all subjects. As a matter of fact, God cannot be defined and He cannot be known. To know a thing means to objectify it. To describe a thing means to limit it. God being the Subject of all subjects, how can He be objectified? It is impossible. So, God alone knows what He is and what He is not and He can never be described. In another sense, God is more than known to us. For, He is our innermost Being, our very Conscience. This existence of God can be clearly felt in Nirvikalpa Samadhi. God has no sex. The Conscience and the life or Jiva in every being is neither male

nor female. The difference of sex is only in the body and its idea only in the mind. Though God is sexless, he takes the male or female form according to the desire of His devotee. As such, God may be called as He, She or It.

4. GOD IS THE CAUSE OF THIS UNIVERSE:—
Regarding God and the universe, there are two theories. Dualistic view is that God out of His infinite powers creates this universe, maintains it and again in the end destroys it or He evolves and involves it. According to the monistic point of view, God's power or Shakti evolves as Spirit, mind, matter and as this visible universe and then again that Power pervades the whole universe in a very subtle form. If we go deeper into these two standpoints, we discern the same meaning. When it is said that God creates this universe, it is quite evident that God does so by His Infinite powers. That means that His power or Shakti comes forward and manifests Itself as the universe. The other view is that God's power evolves as this universe. In both the cases, God is the cause of this universe. Both the schools of thought say that God is All-pervading. That means God is in the created thing also and that there is not a single object in this universe which is without God. We can clarify this point further with an

illustration. Take the sun. From the sun innumerable rays go in different directions covering the entire space of the universe. Those rays going further and further away from the sun appear as separate entities and each ray remains separate from the other and is thought to be so. In reality, however, they all have their source in the sun. The sun is the cause of them all. Without the sun the rays cannot exist at all. In like manner, the whole creation comes from God and exists in God and, in the end, dissolves in God.

Is this Creation false? When God Himself or when God's power Itself has become this universe, how can it be false? What we really mean when we say that the universe is false and God alone is real is that the universe consists of names and forms. These names and forms undergo constant changes. A changing thing cannot but be false. So it is the names and forms that are false; and if we eliminate the names and forms of this universe what remains is God and God alone. Behind all these changing forms of things there must be a thing that does not change and such an unchanging and unchangeable thing is called God. This assertion is not based on mere speculation; it is a real fact. All the great Sages and founders of religion have experienced this Truth and every-

one of us can also experience it provided we live a real life, a pure life and carry on Sadhana (spiritual practice) to attain Nirvikalpa Samadhi. When a man renounces all kinds of desires, practises regular self-control, self-discipline, observes celibacy and carries on regular and systematic meditation and concentration, he attains Samadhi—(*Nirvikalpa Samadhi*). In the state of Nirvikalpa Samadhi the mind merges in the Supreme Being, the idea of subject, object, and knowledge disappears, and, then, what remains is the Ocean of Consciousness by Itself or in Itself. Here, in this state of Samadhi, there can be no idea of either the creation or the Creator, either bondage or Freedom, either pain or pleasure or any of duality. In this state of Samadhi, only One Thing remains that is Brahman or God. After once attaining Nirvikalpa Samadhi when one comes down to the plane of relative consciousness, one sees this universe of names and forms in quite a different light. One's angle of vision of this world completely changes, and one sees Unity in diversity. One perceives God or Brahman behind every name and form. To such a one the whole universe appears as God and God alone. Taking this point of view only, Advaita (monism) philosophy proclaims that there is only God or

Brahman everywhere and in everything and the world is false and it is nothing but a superimposition of the impure, ignorant and dirty mind. An impure and ignorant mind sees multiplicity instead of Unity. It takes the evanescent sense-objects, and the changing names and forms of this universe as real, gets attached to them and loses sight of God and suffers hell-fire. But in reality there is God and God alone everywhere and in every object and that God is One only.

5. ALL RELIGIONS ADMIT THE EXISTENCE OF SELF OR JIVA:—The life principle, the pure Consciousness in every life is called by various names, viz., *Jivatman*, *Jiva*, Self, *Atman*, Soul, etc. The Jiva is the ruling monarch in every breathing body. Wherever there is life, there is this Self. Without the Self there is no life. The All-pervading God living inside a body is called Jiva or Self. As an example, take an empty pot. The pot is surrounded by Akasa (ether) and there is Akasa inside it also. Though the same Akasa is inside and outside the pot, yet, we make a distinction and call one *Mahakasa* (all-pervading Akasa) and the other, *Ghatakasa* (Akasa inside the pot). Similarly, the All-pervading God or Brahman appearing inside a living body as the individual Conscious-

ness (this is not the ego consciousness, but the pure Consciousness) is called the Soul or Atman. That is how when a man attains Nirvikalpa Samadhi the lower consciousness becoming purer and subtler, becomes one with that Supreme Consciousness or the Ocean of Consciousness by Itself or in Itself. And that is how a man coming down to the plane of relative consciousness after attaining Nirvikalpa Samadhi proclaims "I am Brahman. I am God Supreme. I am that Sat-Chit-Ananda Brahman, One without a second." This exclamation is not a fanciful saying, nor is there any hypocrisy about it. It is a bare fact, a fact as clear as the broad day-light. Every man or woman can experience this state. *This is the birth-right of every living being.* There is no mystery or secrecy about it. Those who really hanker after it, do get it on taking the proper path and working sincerely.

6. IN EVERY BEING THERE IS A SOUL, MIND, INTELLECT, WILL, EGO, AND CHITTA (*mind-stuff*):—In the previous paragraph we have said that there is a Soul in every being and that It is the ruling monarch. It lives in the body as a witness. It neither grows nor dies. It is ever the same. Birth and death concern the body and the senses. The chief instrument of the Self is the mind. The

different functions of this mind are called intellect, will, ego and Chitta (mind-stuff). When the mind discriminates, decides and brings out the knowledge of an object or thing, it is called intellect. When the mind makes the motor energy work, it is called will. When the mind identifies itself with the body, it is called ego. That function of the mind that stores up all experiences and reproduces them as memory when called for is called Chitta. It is the mind that works all the five subtle and five gross senses constantly and gathers experiences of this universe.

7.8. ALL RELIGIONS UNANIMOUSLY PROCLAIM THAT IMPURITY OF THE MIND IS THE CAUSE OF IGNORANCE, BONDAGE AND SUFFERING AND ITS PURITY BRINGS MOKSHA OR FREEDOM:—Let us first see what is meant by purity and impurity. Lust, anger, greed, infatuation, pride, hatred, jealousy, attachment, lying, stealing, scolding, selfishness, hypocrisy, swindling, debauchery, etc., are the vices that make the mind impure. These are the sinful things which every religion asks its followers to avoid. These sinful things make the mind impure and this impurity takes one away from God, makes one forget God and such a man suffers terribly in this world. The miseries, worries, sorrows and sufferings that we see in this world

are all the outcome of one's sins. On the contrary, all the religions enjoin their followers to adhere strictly to virtuous things and practise daily the following, viz., truthfulness, kindness, celibacy, love to all beings, charity, unselfishness, nonkilling, nonstealing, contentment, cleanliness, service to parents, elders and venerable persons, the sick, the poor and the needy; self-control, self-discipline, meditation on God, prayer, worship, etc. When one gains purity of mind and heart one becomes happy and this purity leads one to Moksha or Freedom. As a matter of fact, moral and ethical codes of conduct are the *sin-quo-non* of God-realization. And all religions stand on the very foundation of moral and ethical codes of conduct. In fact, no man can make an inch of spiritual progress without perfectly observing them in his life. A hypocrite, a swindler, a thief, a liar and a debauchee can never dream of happiness, much less of God-realization. Where such people have attained God-realization. they have had to leave off their evil and wicked habits, to fervently pray and repent and to do lot of Sadhana. Then only could they get their sins wiped off and attain God-realization. So, for real happiness and to attain Moksha or Freedom a good, pure and holy life is absolutely necessary. All religions prescribe

methods to purify the mind.— Broadly speaking the mind has four main faculties, viz., willing, feeling, thinking and gathering. Though all these faculties are in every mind, all of them are not equally developed in every man. In the vast majority of beings, only one faculty predominates over the other three and according to this predominating faculty, a man takes up a certain path to purify and control the mind. To suit these four faculties of the mind, religions have prescribed four main paths, viz., work, worship, philosophy and psychic-control. And all the religions of the world give prominence to one or all of these paths and ask their followers to stick to them with implicit faith to purify and control the mind and to attain God-realization.

9. ALL RELIGIONS ADMIT REBIRTH, HEAVEN AND HELL, INCARNATION OF GOD OR PROPHETS AND KARMA AND KARMA-PHALA (*action & its fruit*):—All religions admit rebirth. So long as a man has not attained Samadhi and Emancipation, one has to take birth in this world or in some other sphere. A man of good conduct and those that have very good merits go to heaven, and live there for a long time and with the exhaustion of merit they take birth again in this world. To attain Moksha or Freedom, one has to attain Nirvikalpa Samadhi,

in other words, *Brahma-Jnana*. But people who come from heaven take birth in good, pious and prosperous families, have good environments, good healthy bodies and clear sharp intellects. Such people find out their path easily, work hard and attain Samadhi. Such births are rare and they belong to a class of their own. Unlike other ordinary mortals they lead a very pure, ideal and glorious life. They are the real teachers of mankind. On the contrary, immoral and sinful people, when they die, go to hell or take birth in lower life, and lead a life of suffering and misery.

All religions admit Incarnation of God, Prophets, Messiahs, etc. Whether God Himself descends or He sends a perfect Soul for the uplift of Dharma (righteousness) and for leading people along the right path, etc. Both these views carry the same meaning. It is said that a perfect man, a Knower of Brahman becomes Brahman Itself. For, a perfect man has no will of his own. He has no ego idea and he has no sins. He is pure and perfect all-round. And His whole being is rooted in God or he is always living in God. There is no difference between God and such a man. These great men, who are called Incarnations of God, Messiahs, Prophets, etc., and who have founded different great religions belong to a

class of their own. All had attained Nirvikalpa Samadhi and after attaining that they came down from that dizzy height with a Divine Message to the plane of relative consciousness, retained purified ego and preached Dharma (righteousness). Lord Buddha is called one of the ten Avataras (Incarnations of God, Vishnu) and in his sayings Buddha talks of twenty-four previous births, in which he had sacrificed his lives for the sake of others. This only shows that the Avataras (Incarnations of God), Messiahs, Prophets, etc., are highly evolved men spiritually and who had worked hard in previous lives, and, in the end, took birth in pure, holy and prosperous families. They lead a pure, holy and faultless life, do vigorous Sadhana, attain Nirvikalpa Samadhi and become true and genuine leaders of mankind. They are, however, few in number.

Karma and Karma-Phala (action and its fruit) is another thing that all religions admit in some form or another. Action and reaction, work and its fruit, no one can avoid. What one sows in the form of desires, thoughts, words and deeds that one has to reap. By good, noble and elevating desires, thoughts, words and deeds, one courts happiness; on the contrary, by evil and sinful desires, thoughts, words and deeds one courts

misery and sorrow. We are what our past desires, thoughts, words and acts have made us. What we think, we become. The evils, miseries, sufferings and sorrows that we find in this universe are the outcome of the past sins of beings. The joy and prosperity of some beings are also due to their past good deeds. The inequality that we find in this universe is due to the merits and demerits of individual beings. God has no hand in this. Man himself is the maker of his fortune or misfortune. Man has the power to mend or to end himself. By right conduct, right thinking and right effort he can mend himself and can attain eternal Peace, Bliss and Emancipation. But if he takes to the perverted course, leads an immoral, shameless life of debauchery and sin, he paves his path to eternal perdition. This is what is meant by Karma and Karma-Phala. This is what is meant by "Fate is inevitable and what is fated cannot be blotted out." The consequences of every action must be reaped.

10. CASTE:—All religions observe caste in some form or another. Let us see how caste originates, how it grows and how it degenerates.—Objects of similar tastes, qualities, propensities and temperaments forming themselves into groups gives rise

to caste. This is a natural tendency. Let us begin our enquiry from the minerals upwards and see how the different species naturally form into groups of their own.

There is a variety of soils in this world and these constitute separate class of their own. A certain kind of mud is found in certain localities. If we try to mix the earth of different kinds, we find that these do not mix up easily. When we mix them up thoroughly, the soil of stronger kind absorbs that of the inferior kind and the mixture takes a new form or variety. If we examine a river bed, we can observe pebbles, sand and fine earth of different kinds settling down separately in different layers. They do not mix up. The fine mud gathers at one place. Sand particles settle down at some other place and pebbles form into a group somewhere else. Likewise, gold, silver, iron, brass ores etc., are found in certain localities only. This shows that caste exists, though in a crude form, even in earth and in minerals.

Now, let us take plant life. If we study plantation at places where there is natural growth and wild forests, we see that in certain areas and in certain soils only a particular variety of grass, herbs or plants grows. Other species do not and

cannot survive there. So, demarcation by caste in plant life also exists.

If we take insects such as ants, bees, wasps, etc., we see caste developed a step further. Ants, bees, wasps, etc., of different species live in different colonies of their own. And an ant, bee or wasp belonging to one colony is not allowed to go to another colony. When two bees or wasps of the same species belonging to two different colonies meet by chance, they fight each other, and even perish. Again, ants, bees, wasps, etc., belonging to the same colony form into different classes. In every colony, there is a queen or queens (bees have only one queen in colony and ants and wasps have more than one queen). The queen is the head of the colony. Then come the workers. Among the workers there are three classes, viz., constructors, food-seekers and sentinals or guards who guard the colony. Then lastly there are drones. The drones do nothing else but keep company with the queen. These different classes, of bees, ants and wasps, etc., stick to their duties very rigidly. So, we see caste developed in a most scientific way even among insects.

Coming to birds, we see that different species form into a group of their own and every group of one species does not mix with the other groups

easily. That shows that caste exists even among birds.

Among animals also there is a caste system. Many of the wild animals like deer, bisons, elephants and a variety of monkeys live in herds of their own. An animal of one group is not allowed to enter into another herd even of the same species. When equally two powerful herds of the same species meet one another, they fight among themselves terribly. The strongest animal of the herd rules and all the rest obey. Monkeys have a government of a sort. Every group has a leader. The biggest herd numbers between fifty and hundred. Under one supreme leader there are sub-leaders. Every sub-leader bosses over five to ten monkeys (young one's and females) and guides them. The females of the different groups serve and live with the males of their own groups. The long tailed monkeys lead a nomadic life and their movements from place to place and from jungle to jungle depend upon the sweet will of their chief leader. Thus caste system prevails among animals also.

Caste is further developed in a most scientific way among human beings. There is no country without caste in some form or another. People who pride themselves in saying that they belong

to only one caste, automatically divide themselves into three main groups, viz., the rich, the middle class and the poor. The rich always like to mix with and move in the company of other rich people. A rich man cannot move freely with the poor people. He finds it awkward or difficult to do so. On the other hand, he finds it easy and feels at home in the company of other rich people. In Like manner, the middle and the poor class people cannot move freely with one another. Each class feels embarrassed in doing so. A middle class man finds it convenient in clubs, in marriages and in other social gatherings to mix and to move freely with other middle class people and people of his own standard in life. A poor man finds solace in the company of other poor people. Thus, men form themselves into natural groups or castes. Further, these three main groups of people divide themselves again into numerous groups according to their occupations. The rich divide as kings, dukes, counts, lords, millowners, merchants, etc., the middle and the poor class as teachers, priests, petty traders, cultivators, smiths, carpenters, dhobies, sweepers, etc.

Of all the different religions of the world, Hinduism alone has divided people into four main castes, viz., Brahmana (priest), Kshatriya (ruler

and warrior class), Vaishya (trader and cultivator class), and Shudra (serving class). When the Aryans were leading a nomadic life and their population was very thin they had no caste system. As such, they had no kings and no government. Then each family was ruled by its eldest male member and he was respected and obeyed by all the younger members of the family. Different families had their own family chiefs and these chiefs occupied the position of kings and dictators. There were many families and many chiefs and they all lived and moved side by side. When the Aryans came to India and found its soil rich and fertile, they gave up their roaming life and slowly but steadily settled down so that the different families began to live side by side in their own family groups. In course of time the members of each family multiplied and began to expand. Then there began quarrels and wars and the weaker families were conquered and subdued by the stronger ones and thus, in the long run, the conquerors took the position of kings and emperors. Even then caste was not rigid and it remained in a fluid state. When the Aryan population steadily increased, and when they established different kingdoms, at a particular stage of the nation's growth, wise men found it necessary

to divide people into different castes so that they might perceive a particular thought, culture and aspect of life and make progress in that particular direction to raise the nation as a whole. This division was quite scientific and natural to make the nation grow all-round and reach the acme of glory. For example, in our schools we impart elementary education to our children in various subjects but when they go for higher studies we teach them certain special subjects for advanced course suited to their tastes and capacities. By this system of fixing special subjects for higher studies in colleges and universities, we facilitate research and new discoveries by the students for our all-round advancement. That is why the present day education has made so much progress in different branches of learning. Similar was the object in forming castes and in entrusting them with different duties (Dharmas) by the great King and Rishi (Seer) Manu. Manu was the first and the greatest Indian Law-giver. Manu Smriti is even today the supreme authority in deciding the Dharma (duty) of the four castes, i.e., Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra. Besides this, Manu divides the life of a man into four parts, viz., Brahmachari (student), Grahasti (householder), Vanprasthi (retired life)

and a Sannyasi (monk) and prescribes strict rules and regulations to be followed in each Ashrama (part).

Of these four castes, the Brahmin class was entrusted with education, protection of Dharma and pursuit of religion. The Brahmin was to lead a pure life—a simple life of self-discipline, and self-control. He was to learn the Vedas and keep Dharma alive. He was not to hoard money; on the contrary, he was to lead a life of renunciation and to impart free secular and spiritual knowledge to deserving students. When the Brahmins led a true life, they were very powerful and highly respected everywhere. Even the kings and emperors showed deep reverence to them. The Kshatriya class was the ruling class and it was entrusted with the protection and defence of the country. It was the Kshatriya class that became emperors, kings and soldiers. Fighting the enemy, protecting the country and property, maintaining law and order and ensuring peace and plenty became the duty of the Kshatriya class. Cultivation, trading, cattle rearing, finding out new resources to increase the wealth of the country and making it prosperous was the duty of the Vaishya class. And service of three higher caste people was enjoined on the Shudras. This

caste system was based on very sound lines. In olden times, only the Kshatriya class took part in wars wherever they broke out and the other three classes continued to do their duty without any let or hindrance. Thus, during wars, the entire national life was not paralysed as in these days. When the four castes stuck to their respective 'Dharmas (duties) in India, the nation prospered and made stupendous progress in different branches of learning, became rich fabulously and rose to great heights. To start with, caste was not very rigid and it was not determined by birth alone but took into consideration one's merits also. A highly evolved man spiritually, a wise man, a man of deep learning was extolled, elevated and called a Brahmana and designated a Brahma-Rishi. In the long run, however, the different castes degenerated, became selfish, misinterpreted the Scriptures, and all sorts of mischiefs crept in so that caste by birth alone came into vogue and all other aspects of it came to be totally neglected and the spirit underlying the original caste system was completely lost sight of.

Let us see how caste has developed in other places, as a natural growth. As an illustration, take a farmer with four sons. These four sons

do not possess the same tastes and tendencies and differ from one another in more ways than one. One may have great taste for religion and philosophy. The second may like politics. The third may be enamoured of trade while the fourth may be a blockhead but strong in body. He would naturally take to hard manual work. These four sons develop in their own individual ways in the art of living, dressing, eating, etc. The philosopher naturally takes to simple, pure and meditative life. He likes to mix and move with people of his taste and even if he marries, he prefers a girl of tendencies similar to his own. The second son taking up politics moves with people of different kind altogether and leads a rather active life. His way of living, thinking, dressing etc., completely differs from that of his philosopher brother and, when he marries, he naturally goes for a partner of his own tastes. The third son busies himself in money making. He has to speculate, devise plans and find out means and methods of accumulating wealth. His way of living, dressing, eating, etc., therefore, completely differs from that of his other brothers. He is naturally a miser, lacking in a broad outlook on life. When he marries, he likes to take a wife suited to his temperament. The fourth son

doing hard manual work in dust, dirt, sun and rain cannot keep himself neat like his other three brothers. He cannot always afford to put on neat clothes, nor can he observe cleanliness at all hours as his brothers do and when he chooses a wife, he does so to suit his occupation in life. We witness these simple but hard facts everywhere. These four types of men along with their wives and children having divergent likings and different tastes cannot mix with one another freely and without reserve at all occasions, although they do so occasionally so long as their parents are alive. With the death of their father and mother, these four sons with their wives and children settle down in different places to earn their livelihood and after some years each feels embarrassed in the company of the other. In spite of all their differences, the first generation of these four families knows that they all descend from one common father and mother and belong to the same caste. But after some generations the descendants totally forget their original ancestor and his descendants develop themselves into four different castes.

Even when there is no caste system in a nation the descendants of the same person divide themselves into numerous castes according

to their choice as is seen in different countries of the world. In the elementary stage of the nation's growth before the people were divided into four main castes, caste in India also depended on one's taste, tendency and occupation. When the Rishi Manu with the help of wise men graded the whole nation into four main groups (castes) according to individual Guna and Karma (inherent taste, occupation or work) and enforced upon them their respective duties, the sons and daughters of the four groups were compelled to perceive and follow their respective caste duties as something compulsory. People of ordinary calibre did follow their Swadharma (caste duty), but men and women of extraordinary merits were everywhere extolled and given the high position of a Brahmana. There are many instances to prove this. Vishwamitra, though a Kshatriya by birth, did severe Tapasya (penance) and attained Nirvikalpa Samadhi. He was then given the rank of a Brahma-Rishi. Rishi Valmiki was a robber to begin with but when he attained Wisdom, he was made a Brahma-Rishi. Narada was the son of a maid servant but as result of his supreme Wisdom and unparalleled devotion to God, he was given the honour of a Deva-Rishi. Vyasa was born of a fisherman's daughter but he

was the man who with the help of his disciples brought the four Vedas and the eighteen Puranas into book form, and was consequently given the supreme title of Jagat-Guru (supreme teacher or world teacher). Even today people of all the four castes worship Vyasa on Vyasa Purnima (known as Guru Purnima also). Thus, in the beginning, caste was not very rigid. People understood the spirit behind the caste system and practised tolerance so that each caste tried to follow its Swadharma (caste duty) in full faith. Sri Krishna says in the Gita (Ch. III, Shloka 35): "Better is one's own Dharma, though imperfect, than the Dharma of another well-performed. Better is death in one's own Dharma: the Dharma of another is fraught with fear." In those days people knew well that it was not mere birth in a certain caste or family that brought Emancipation; it actually depended on following one's Swadharma and lay in performing one's duties properly, leading a pure, simple life of self-discipline, self-control and in gaining Wisdom. They also understood the four-fold aim of life, viz., Dharma (righteousness), Artha, (wealth), Kama (enjoyment) and Moksha (Freedom). And Moksha could be attained by people of all castes, provided they led a pure and holy life. Mere birth in

a certain caste alone could not and did not make a man pure and holy. It is really not birth and a certain kind of work that brings Moksha, but a pure and virtuous life. In doing a work, and in giving charity, etc., it is the internal motive and sincerity, that counts more than the external act. Take two persons of whom one is a priest and the other a sweeper. The priest goes to the temple as a matter of routine, worships God for show and without the least faith. But the sweeper cleanses the dirty streets and the foul-smelling drains full of zeal and with intense faith in God, looking upon his work as God's work and dedicating the fruits of his actions to his Beloved Lord. Which of these two persons is near and dear to God? Whose work is more meritorious? Surely, the sweeper is more near and dear to God and his work excels that of the priest. Thus a man may be born as a Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya or a Shudra but the most essential things wanted for his emancipation are his sincerity of purpose, purity of heart, dexterity in work, and pure and undefiled love for God. In this connection what Lord Sri Krishna says in the Gita runs as follows:—"Every work must be done as worship, and one must abandon all attachment to work and to its fruit. Every work must be

done as work for work's sake. One should never like or dislike any work that is prescribed as his Swadharma (caste duty). At the same time, one should never neglect any part of his duty. Keeping this idea in mind, if the people of different castes properly observe their Dharmas (Scriptural injunctions of different castes) and perform their duties without any flaw and without any hitch, all of them, without the least reservation, can attain eternal Peace, Bliss and Freedom."

CASTE BY BIRTH:— With the coming into existence of compulsory caste in India people of different castes were made to follow their respective duties faithfully and the government enforced them. Thus with the different people sticking to their respective duties implicitly, the nation began to grow and prosper all-round. In the initial stages, there was not much difference between the three higher castes, viz., Brahmana, Kshatriya and Vaishya. Originally the Shudra class came from the aborigines whom the Aryans conquered and subdued. These people were kept down and not given the privileges of the three higher castes. According to the Manu Smriti the sons of people belonging to the Brahmana, Kshatriya and Vaishya castes, after their thread ceremony (after thread ceremony one is called

a Dwija (twice born), i. e., he is considered to have a new birth, had to live with a Guru (teacher) and learn the Vedas, etc., upto the age of twenty-five and then had to embrace householder's life if they so liked or vowed to life-long celibacy. For the higher three castes, life was divided into four parts, viz., Brahmachari (student life with perfect celibacy), Grihastha (householder), Vanprastha (recluse) and Sannyasi (monk). The Shudra class was not given any of these privileges. A Sudra's duty is to render service to the higher three castes and he is forbidden to study the Vedas nor can he become a Vanprasthi or a Sannyasi. This clearly shows that the higher three castes, being Aryans, had their own special privileges. After some generations and having followed their particular Dharmas these three higher castes cultivated special traits so that their original habits, customs, and systems completely changed and took three distinct shapes. Thus, in the long run, even these three higher castes found it very difficult to mix, move, interdine and intermarry with one another.

CASTE AND HEREDITY:—As has been said, when the caste system was not so rigid, the people of India chose their own caste according to their individual tastes and tendencies. But, when

caste became compulsory and fixed, the sons of the same father, in spite of divergent tastes and abilities, had to follow the profession of their father. When a family follows a particular profession for some generations, it naturally comes to imbibe the niceties of that particular profession and its descendants become experts. As an illustration, let us take two boys, each ten years old. One is a farmer's son living on a village farm and the other a doctor's living in a city. The farmer's child by constant association with his parents, easily picks up the art of planting, manuring, watering, etc., and learns the names of different plants. But if you ask him about radio, cinema, shop-keeping, names of medicines, etc., he would be quite at sea. On the other hand, the doctor's son is able to tell names of many important medicines and can talk about radio, telephone, etc. About plants, plantation, etc., he is quite in dark. Likewise, a Brahmin's son easily gets accustomed to religion, worship, etc., a prince easily learns from his parents how to command and how to appear in a royal style in public, etc. A merchant's son easily learns how to purchase and sell things and to earn money. So, in devising the caste system and making it compulsory our Law-giver helped the nation to

grow and develop all-round. The Brahmin class sincerely following their Swadharma (caste duty) for generations gave to the world the highest kind of philosophy in the form of Vedas and Vedanta. Besides lofty and sublime philosophy and religion, they also made new discoveries in Ayurveda (medicine), mathematics, geometry, algebra, astronomy, etc. The Kshatriyas made progress in the science of warfare and administration. The Vaishya class made progress in trade, and trading with the different parts of the world made the country fabulously rich. In the beginning people of all the different castes worked very hard and sincerely to make the nation prosper. And for generations, the Brahmin power ruled the nation.

But when the country became abnormally rich, people became easy-going and sensual. The Brahmins also forgot the ideal of simple living and high thinking and succumbed to lust and gold. As a result of this fall, the Jnana Kanda (knowledge portion of the Vedas or the Upanishads) of the Vedas was neglected and prominence was given to Karma Kanda (ritualistic portion) of the Vedas, with the result that Yagas and Yajnas (sacrifices) came into vogue, and the kings and the rich people of the country

instead of practising self-discipline and mind-control, found it easy to get a pass-port to heaven by spending money in performing Yagas and Yajnas. And through these Yagas and Yajnas, the Brahmins earned a lot of wealth and consequently became rich and selfish and began to lead a degraded and disgraceful life. Naturally, these people began to misinterpret the Scriptures according to their whims and fancies, and to mislead the masses. Thus the spirit of the original caste system was completely lost sight of and, as days rolled by, caste system became a horrible hell. With the fall of Brahmin power, Kshatriya power predominated for some generations and, in due course, that power also faded away making room for Vaishya power to take its place. The Vishya power has now ruled for many generations and it too has almost come to an end. Time is now ripe for the Shudra power to predominate and we are almost in sight of it. When this power reaches its dizzy heights, it will ruin all culture. But this power also must come to an end in due course and then there will be evolution again.

In deciding the caste of a person we should, therefore, take three things into consideration, viz., his heredity, environment and ability. A child inherits certain good and bad qualities from its

parents. These inherited qualities, to a certain extent, do influence one's character. Secondly, a man develops his character according to his environments. By proper environment the inherited qualities can even be changed. Lastly, the natural ability and talents of a person count. Even the children of the same parents, having the same heredity and environment, develop their character, tastes and tendencies in different ways. Talent is a natural gift from past life, i.e., the effect of Karma-Phala (fruits of past life).

To sum up, man cannot live without God. A life without God is like a ship without a mooring or a rudder. Such a life always ends in misery. As a matter of fact, man cannot deny God. In denying God he has to deny himself, which is impossible. Besides, if we take the whole universe and study its activities we find that they tend towards these two objects, viz., happiness and freedom. These ideas of happiness and freedom are embedded even in a blade of grass. But a being by letting his activities take the perverted course, courts misery instead of happiness, and bondage instead of Freedom. An ordinary man thinks that he would be happy by amassing wealth, by sense-enjoyments and by making name and getting fame. But do these things actually make one

happy ? No, they do not. These provide him with only momentary pleasures but not eternal Peace, Bliss and Freedom. How can a man, then, get real Peace, Bliss and Freedom ? The answer is clear and simple. It can be had only by knowing one's own True Nature. To gain this one must control one's own mind. To gain control over the mind, one must exercise control over all the senses and lead a well-regulated life. Here again, to have control over the mind and the senses, the codes of ethical and moral conduct play a very important part. Without a pure life, without a perfect character and without establishing oneself in truthfulness, chastity, kindness, love, charity, etc., not an inch of progress can be made spiritually.

As an illustration, let us take the sun with its rays falling on a big mirror. The mirror catches the image of the sun; it also reflects light. Let us suppose that this reflected light is falling upon a pond of water, very dirty and full of ripples. Though the reflection of the light of the sun from the mirror falls on the water surface, the latter fails to show the image of the sun. If the water were not so dirty and if the ripples on its surface were not so heavy, we could see the reflected image though dimly. On the other

hand, if the water were clear and clean and still (i.e., without ripples) we could see the reflection clearly. Here the sun can be compared to God, and the mirror to the individual Self (Jivatman) and the water of the pond in its three states to mind of three kinds. The water that is very dirty and full of ripples is the Tamasic-mind (mind which is very impure and dull), the semi-dirty water with ripples is the Rajasic-mind (active, impure and desire-stricken mind), and the crystal water without any ripples is the Sattvic-mind (the mind which is pure, subtle and one-pointed). (The minds of beings can be divided into many groups, but, for the sake of convenience, we divide them into three main groups.) Though the reflected rays fall equally, on all these three kinds of water-surface, we miss the image completely in the first case, we get only a glimpse of it in the second case, whereas we clearly perceive the reflected image in the third case. Like the sun of our world, God is the real life behind every creature everywhere. The Self is only a reflection of that Supreme Being, and the mind receives its life and light from the Self. If the mind is ruffled, dirty, sinful and unclean, it completely fails to catch the reflection of the Self and one gets merged in sense-enjoyments and gets attached to

things mundane. A semi-dirty mind or a Rajasic-mind is an active mind with innumerable desires and ambitions. Such a mind understands the necessity of God and Dharma (righteousness). but still, it gets attached to things of the world. When in danger or in fear of death, a Rajasic man thinks of God and prays to Him. When one's mind is pure, subtle and one-pointed like the still and crystal pure surface of the water of the pond (Sattvic-mind), it catches the reflection, that is to say, it perceives the Self. God-realization or Samadhi is nothing but the throwing back of the rays of light from the water pond to the sun. To attain Samadhi, therefore, the mind must be made pure, calm and one-pointed, and then, it should be taken back to Self which should, in turn, be united with the Supreme Being. This is what is meant by attaining real or eternal Peace, Bliss and Freedom or Moksha. This is what all religions aim at. All the founders of different religions have lived a simple, pure and virtuous life and they have also commanded their followers to do the same. By a strict observance of these precepts, the great Saints of different faiths have solved the riddle of life and have attained eternal Peace, Bliss and Freedom. People

of different faiths forget these facts, miss the aim of life and make the whole world a veritable hell.

Children of Immortal Bliss ! caste aside your ignorance and pride and be wise. Build up your character, by leading a simple, pure, and pious life. Love all, practise tolerance and forbearance and hate none. For, by hating others you hate your own Self and thereby God also. Be wise, become strong physically, mentally, morally and spiritually and attain eternal Peace, Bliss and Freedom which is your birth right. Arise ! Awake ! And stop not till the Goal is reached ! Amen !

His Holiness
Sri Swami Narayananandaji Maharaj
of
RISHIKESH - [HIMALAYAS] - INDIA
A Brief Life-Sketch
&
An Appreciation
BY
His Devoted Disciples
of
the East and the West

A Brief Life-Sketch

An Appreciation

His Devoted Disciples

The East and the West



HIS HOLINESS SRI SWAMI NARAYANANANDAJI MAHARAJ is one of the greatest Sages of the 20th. century. He hails from South India—the hallowed-home of Shri Shankaracharya of world-wide immortal fame. He was born on Friday, April 12, 1902 at Kongana village (South Coorg) of respectable Coorg family (Kademada family). To his father, Sri Kalappa and his mother, Srimati Ponnamma, he was dearly beloved as he was born after many years of penance, fastings, prayers and offerings to the local gods and goddesses. In devout thankfulness, they named the child **NANJUNDA** (Nanju=potion, Unda=to eat=Shiva), little knowing that this son of their cravings and yearnings was destined one day to be blessed with God-realization to become the true guide, Philosopher and friend of all eager and struggling spiritual aspirants the world over, in this materialistic age of thermo-nuclear bombs.

The child was robust, handsome and jovial. He had a smiling face and bewitching eyes. Little wonder that he, soon became the cynosure of all eyes in the village.

Naturally the child was much attached to his parents, but though he had to tear himself away from them at the age of five to prosecute his studies, he felt unconcerned and went away with a light heart. Five years later, his father died. That was a cruel blow to the little Nanjunda and proved to be the turning-point in his life.

As a boy, little Nanjunda was very active and restless. He was an all-round student-good at studies and conspicuous on the playground as well. He represented his school at tournaments in games and sports and acquitted himself creditably. But in spite of all this activity and restlessness, it was common knowledge that he sat down quietly and regularly for half an hour or so in the mornings and evenings in serious Divine-contemplation. It came to him instinctively without outside influence of any kind what-so-ever. This innate inclination towards meditative life and the regularity and sanctity with which he practised concentration of mind in those early days gave him a glimpse of the Supreme joy and ecstasy lying hidden in its folds and laid a firm foundation for the dearly cherished and unique experience of Samadhi and Self-realization in the days to come. Surely, coming events do cast their shadows before.

After finishing his studies, the young Nanjunda did not go for a married life. Instead, he renounced the world at the age of twenty-seven and became a Sannyasi (monk). Not that his life was a bed of thorns and he was disgusted with it. No. He had comforts of all kinds. He had never met with dejections of any sort from any quarter. The fact is that his mental make-up had undergone a complete change. As he sat one day, as usual, for meditation, he experienced deep concentration of mind for more than an hour. When this high pitch of concentration was over, he heard his inner voice calling upon him to renounce the world and the young man lost no time in distributing all his property and personal assets up to the last pie and left his hearth and home in 1929 in quest of a Guru (spiritual teacher).

It was a long and arduous journey of thousands of miles to Belur Math of Sri Rama-Krishna Mission in Calcutta towards which the young Sannyasi (monk) directed his foot-steps. And on reaching his destination and on the very first night of his stay in the sacred precincts of the Math, he had a dream-vision of Sri Rama-Krishna Paramahansa Deva sitting by his side and blessing him. For three days he was

subjected to tests of various kinds of different monks before they were satisfied and permitted him to be brought in the presence of the President—Mahapurshaji Maharaj (a very great Soul), a direct disciple of Shri RamaKrishna Paramahansa Deva. The President was then aged eighty-four. When ushered to the President's room, our young Sannyasi prostrated himself before the revered great Saint and mentally surrendered himself to him completely. It is said that the very sight of the new would-be disciple filled the Guru's heart with satisfaction. He simply enquired of him his name and blessed him.

SWAMI NARAYANANANDA, as he came to be called in due course, loved his revered Guru with intense devotion and religious fervour. The Guruji Maharaj, in turn, bestowed on him his deep affection.

Swamiji in course of time developed a great thirst for God-realization. Secluded life began to appeal to him more and more. It was not long before he realised that to achieve his noble and sacred purpose, he must retire to the soul-stirring majesty of the Himalayas for rigorous Tapasya (penance). When this mental struggle was going on, one day, his revered Guruji, while

in an inspired mood, called him and ordered him with the following words : "You proceed to the Himalayas for Tapasya and be merged in Samadhi." Accordingly Swamiji left Belur Math in the year 1932.

Face to face with the mighty snow-clapped and awe-inspiring ranges of the Himalayas, Swamiji felt exhilarated and began to undergo rigorous penance in all sincerity. He worked indefatigably. Bodily comforts he could have none and he felt the least concern for them. Busy in Mantra-Jap ordinarily for 12-16 hours every day, performing at least a lac of Mantra-Jap daily—and sometimes with no rest or respite whatsoever day and night, he strove earnestly and patiently to bask in Divine Effulgence for which he had staked his all. And be it said to his greatest satisfaction and pardonable pride that his very hard, sincere, regular and systematic Sadhana—Mantra-Jap, meditation, concentration of mind and practice of Yoga—was suitably rewarded and blessed with Nirvikalpa Samadhi.

It was a Shivaratri night—the festival of the Lord Shiva's night-long vigil and worship throughout India—towards the close of February 1933. Swamiji sat for meditation at midnight as usual. He felt the full rising of the Kundalini

Shakti to Sahasrara and his mind soared to a very high pitch. His breathing stopped automatically (Kevala Kumbhak) and so did the heart-beats. The body idea melted away, he lost the ideas of subject, object and knowledge, his lower consciousness becoming finer and subtler became one with the Ocean of Consciousness by Itself and the mind—along with will, ego, intellect and Chitta merged completely in the great void (Infinity). Swamiji felt himself one with the Ocean of Consciousness by Itself. He remained in this state of Samadhi for quite a long time. And then, slowly but surely, his mind though still at a very high pitch, came down to the plane of relative consciousness. But his angle of vision had undergone a complete change and he could perceive the one Atman (Self) everywhere behind all names and forms. In fact, he felt Divine unity in universal diversity. The seeker after Truth thus became the Path-Finder, and resolved to share his unique experience with true spiritual aspirants all the world over and to communicate to them the ways and means of Self-realization as he realized by actual practice.

It was in the year 1936, after the Maha Samadhi (death) of his revered Guru Deva, that

Swamiji severed all connections with Sri Rama-Krishna Mission and, in due course, came to be enthroned as spiritual Guru in the hearts of his admiring followers in the East and the West.

II

SRI SWAMI NARAYANANANDA is a Godly man. That he is one of the greatest Sages of our times goes without saying. Those who have directly come in contact with him or sat at his feet as disciples know him only too well by personal experience and realise his greatness as a spiritual Guru. Those who have pondered over and benefitted from his illuminating books, speak of them thus: [We quote a few opinions out of numerous tributes paid to the books on their own accord after reading them.]

1. "On the Eastern horizon in the holy city of Rishis and Yogis has risen a bright star brilliantly shedding its light on most abstruse questions pertaining to the practice of Yoga."

2. [Another Westerner who visited India and various religious institutions and read philosophical and religious books written by different great men and after visiting Swamiji and reading his books writes thus:] "How can I ever thank you for your wonderful Darshan of May 31, 1959. Your books are the priceless treasure I brought back from India. The movie camera captured your enchanting smile and the beauty of God that you

are. Although I have not written sooner, you are always in my heart and thoughts and ceaselessly I thank God that we were able to make the trip to lovely India and that through the Grace of God, got in personal contact with your Holiness."

3. "I cannot too often repeat how great influence the book: "THE SECRETS OF MIND-CONTROL" has had upon me. This wonderful book gives the most subtle of all subtle imagined. I have observed thorough alteration. I am much more quiet now-have got a more sharp discriminating faculty, etc.

Taken upon the whole, it is one of the most wonderful books I have ever read. Nor have I read anything like that and I shall not again read such ones, so great is the impression which they have made upon me."

4. "For the past five years I have read every book available in this city (New York) on Hindu spiritual teachings, but the books by your beloved Swami Narayananda are by far superior of any of their kind."

5. "You already know my admiration for all the books-of Swami Narayananda-being the most "DEEP" and at the same time practical ones for a sincere Sadhaka. In them are contained the essence of everything genuine of Indian Philosophy combined with the experience of personal Realization, which alone make them fit for being "GUIDING" books for spiritual seekers. I know of no other books today in which are contained this Knowledge in such a form."

Swamiji is the embodiment of purity and selflessness. Though in his sixtieth year, he looks much younger for his age. And the secret of his youthful appearance and the halo that surrounds him lies in the strict life of Brahmacharya (celibacy) that he has lived and the practice of Yoga that he has diligently pursued. In fact, he lives the ideal life which he inspires others to emulate and preaches his followers to aspire after and strive for in all earnestness. Who knows that the Omnipresent, Omniscient and Omnipotent God, in His Divine Providence, may have sent him as the new prophet at this crucial juncture of man's sojourn on earth to rejuvenate and repropagate the ancient Indian ideal of Dharma (righteousness).

Swamiji does not believe in creating Samajas, Maths or Organisations or even gathering people around him for self-exaltation. Secluded he lives a clean, simple, innocent and independent life free from shackles and fetters of all kinds. He has no funds at his disposal nor does he care to collect and hoard them. Pomp and show as well as power and pelf he abhors. Name and fame, that "Last infirmity of a noble mind" he discounts and shuns. He is easily accessible to all seekers after Truth, rich and poor, young

and aged, alike and knows no distinctions of caste, creed, colour and sex in propagating his MESSAGE. He is the true Guide, Philosopher and friend of all. His sole aim in life is to communicate to the sincerely struggling spiritual aspirants his personal experience of God-realization in order to lift them up to follow in his foot-steps so that they may also taste the sweet nectar of Divine Immanence in themselves through Mantra-Jap, mind-control, concentration, contemplation and practice of Yoga.

As a spiritual Guru, Swamiji shows fatherly care and affection and motherly tenderness towards all who approach him for guidance. His interest in the spiritual well-being of his followers is never failing. He always meets them on their own ground, answers their queries and resolves their problems as sweetly as possible. Those who correspond with him about their difficulties in Sadhana (spiritual practice) or seek his advice for self-upliftment, receive prompt replies which encourage them to still greater endeavours along the right path. His words are resonant with great helping and healing powers for the moral and spiritual edification of his disciples. His influence over them is deep and permanent. The perspectives

that he enables them to conjure up before their mind's eyes are very subtle and beggar description.

In this materialistic age when power, pelf, name, fame and even sexuality, etc., hold sway and there is no end to man's sordid wishes and desires, it is a great solace to meet such a noble person who, even as a youngman, spurned all earthly connections and considerations and renounced the world to devote himself to a life of dedication to his Inner-Self in quest of union with the Infinite. We love, adore and venerate him as a true Teacher because there is no compromise in him in essentials and he strikes in all sincerity and humility to lead aspirants towards the attainment of the Highest Goal in life.

In short, as a spiritual Guru, Swamiji represents the essence of the highest spiritual attainment and a clear understanding of the mentality of the modern man. The essentials of the system of education that he has laid down cannot but help boys, girls and adolescents attain perfection in life that the world is so sorely devoid of at present. It is only too true to say that in SWAMI NARAYANANANDAJI the new India of today has personified the highest ideal of the India of Rishis of old.

Swamiji has been recently photographed under the Neem tree which he has planted in the garden of 'NARAYANA NIVAS'. The twin trunks of this tree symbolise the ideals he stands for and preaches. To quote his own words : "Many people confuse the aims and ends of State, Education and religion. They think that these three departments are quite separate from one another and have different aims and ends. Whereas this is not really so.....The aim of an ideal State is to protect the lives and properties of its subjects and to make them peaceful, prosperous and happy.....The aim of Education is to make a man wise, peaceful, prosperous and happy. What religion aims at is also to make man good, peaceful, prosperous and happy.....Where does then true Freedom lie? It lies in knowing one's own True Nature or, in other words, in gaining Universal-Consciousness.....This does not mean that a man must neglect his body and material things. This will be a blunder. To get attached to sense-objects and to become a slave of the mind and senses are the two real danger spots. These make one suffer hell-fire. To neglect the body, to deny it its bare necessities and to show a cold shoulder to all material things are also fraught with

dangerous possibilities. Such an attitude also leads one away from the goal..... Any education that takes man away from God is no education. Likewise, any education that makes students neglect the material side of life is also a misnomer. For a happy, healthy and all-round growth of man, there must be a combination of the Eastern and the Western (spiritual and material (science) ideals. This combination will lead to a happy and healthy growth.” (From Swamiji’s book:-“MIND, ITS SOURCE & CULTURE”-Pp.133-140)

I I I

SWAMI NARAYANANANDAJI’S greatest and invaluable contribution towards the spiritual emancipation of man is the revelation of his unique experiences in the form of books in English. Swamiji has, by now, written seventeen original books (A complete list of which appears at the end of this book along with translations of some of them into Hindi.) on a variety of subjects to teach man how to come face to face with the Ultimate Reality and feel the Supreme Ecstasy of communication with the Almighty as a matter of course. Having lived a life of severe austerity in seclusion for well nigh two decades and having attained Nirvikalpa Samadhi through

Brahmacharya (celibacy), strict self-discipline, perfect mind-control and deep contemplation, he is eminently fitted to show the right path to people groping in ignorance for the realization of their cherished hope in life.

A narration of the cruel circumstances in which Swamiji had to pass a number of years of his dedicated life and the ordeals that he had to pass through would make one's hair stand on end. Suffice it to say that receiving no encouragement from any quarter and being even denied the comfort of a roof to take shelter under and, contrarily, suffering insurmountable difficulties and obstacles and facing manfully the calumny; slanders and scandals heaped upon him by unscrupulous and evil-minded persons for their own selfish ends, Swamiji carried on unruffled the even tenor of his life and busied himself in writing books which, he penned with marvellous ease and facility. But when the manuscripts were ready, Swamiji had no wherewithal to get them published. His honest labour lay unfruitful; his cherished hope unfulfilled. Yet he did not lose hope.

The ways of Providence are indeed strange and past finding out. After the partition of India in 1947, four orphans—two brothers and

two sisters, Shri Ram Prasad Gandhi, Kumari Krishna, Kumari Savitri Devi and Shri Surya Prakash who had migrated from West Pakistan after having lost their hearth and home, chanced to come into contact with Swamiji. They read through the Mss. and, convinced of their high merit offered to publish them. Though these youngsters became the publishers, worked very hard and made lot of self-sacrifice, yet, Swamiji had to keep a close watch, take the burden and guide them at every stage of progress (development). Had it not been for the great self-sacrifice of Swamiji all the books would not have seen light.

A few names it is worth while to record in this connection. Among Swamiji's Indian devoted disciples, a mention deserves to be made of Sri G. L. SETHI, B. Sc. (Honours) B. T.—Gold Medalist, now of Delhi. He is also a refugee from West Pakistan and, on migration to India, chanced to come to stay at 'Shanti Kutir' in August, 1947, in one block of which Swamiji was then having his abode. He has been an educationist of standing and reputation in the Punjab. As a labour of love, he has read through the Mss. of all these books with great care and at considerable sacrifice to prepare them for the

press. The names of Sri Swami Shankarananda, Sri Tilak Raj Khanna, B A., and Sri Ishar Das Gulati also deserve mentioning. They all helped in spreading the MESSAGE of Swamiji.

Among the Western disciples of Rev. Swamiji, Miss Anne Lise Dresler of Copenhagen, Denmark, [Europe] did yeoman's service unto Swamiji's cause in translating many of the books into Danish language and publishing them in Denmark (Europe) with great love, devotion and self-sacrifice. Mrs. Edith Enna also translated some of the books into Danish language and closely corroborated with Miss Anne Lise Dresler and helped whole-heartedly in publishing all the books of Swamiji in Denmark. Mrs. Birgit Holger Prytz and Mrs. Ingeborg Brochorst also helped Miss Dresler, in proof-reading and in running a religious Magazine.

Special mention may be made here of a sincere and devoted disciple of Swamiji—Mr. Jim Rundt, of Milwaukee (Wisconsin)—U. S. A., who came in touch with Swamiji in the year 1961 and helped Swamiji's cause whole-heartedly with free contributions. Mr. Joseph Coanda and Mrs. Victoria Coanda of Milwaukee-(Wisconsin)-U. S. A., also rendered great service in spreading Swamiji's MESSAGE.

—A Short Life-Sketch of—

**The Revered Author - Swami Narayanananda
As Predicted By**

Shri Ramswaroop Suri, Honorary Director, Yoga Physical Culture Institute, Batala, (Punjab), with the help of the science of palmistry-on January 13, 1954.

1. The cross inbetween the lines of heart and head—the parallel lines at the mount of Jupiter—the great triangle formed with the lines of head and heart, with a base line from the line of life—all go to prove the peak of spiritualism.

2. The presence of circles in the fingers of Sun and Jupiter and on the thumb prove the association and friendship with very great men, of the order of Rajas and Maha-Rajas.

3. The starting of line of head from the line of life, is a clear proof about the strong will, determination and topmost qualities of head. Its leaning towards the mount of Luna and actually turning to the mount of Luna, is a clear proof that the person possesses a very bright quality of imagination, concentration and meditation. He is deeply interested in one particular science of a very high order.

4. The presence of parallel lines on the mount of Luna and second line of fortune prove

that his personality is a subject of fascination for other people and they are so fascinated that they do help him in kind and coin.

5. The long line of heart going to its own mount—Jupitor and ending in a fork is a clear symptom of his single-mindedness, gentle, meek and sympathetic nature. His heart is bold.

6. The presence of squares on the mount of Jupitor and the parallel lines, is a clear proof that he should lead the people in search of Truth. Had it not been for these parallel lines the person would have been a great leader in any other sphere—but their appearances (of these lines) prove that he is a very great leader in spiritualism.

7. The uprising of lines on the line of life is a clear proof that the person should shine in his life : say at the age of 52 - 56 - that period should be taken as the brightest period of his life, bringing him prosperity all-round.

8. The line of life is un-interrupted, healthy and long, so he enjoys a very good health and long life.

9. The line crossing the line of life before the middle part, is an indication that the person must have seen great troubles in earlier life, i. e., between the age of thirty and forty-eight.

—*A Short Life-Sketch of*—

THE REVERED AUTHOR-SWAMI NARAYANANANDA
AS PREDICTED BY

SHRI R. M. DATTA, *India Known Psycho-Palmist*,
DEHRA DUN (U.P.)

*with the help of the science of palmistry on
April 14 - 1957.*

Jupitor is the King of Planets and the most impressionable in that it lies within human power to develop it to any extent towards Self-Realization and this fact is eloquently borne out by the examination of the left and right Palms of His Holiness Sri Swami Narayanandaji. His left palm shows Venus and Sun in prominence and Jupitor normally developed. But in his right palm it is Jupitor that overshadows all other planets and supported by Sun it dominates to such an extent in Swamiji's 28th year of life that all worldly pleasures lose their hold on him and within a period of five years Swamiji is able to experience highest spiritual Bliss-but within him speaks the Inner-Self that he should kindle light in ignorant hearts steeped in the darkness of "*Maya*", reveal to them their real-selves which in truth embody the Real Truth and mingle themselves into the Higher-Self as rivers gleefully lose themselves into the mighty

ocean. The combination of Jupitor and Sun in Swamiji gives him the power of expression and Divine inspiration-which steal even steal-hearts and rapidly they melt into love for this MESSENGER of God whose only mission in life is to lead the suffering humanity to the path of righteousness through self-discipline and mind-control and thereby experience the Supreme Reality within Itself (themselves). To continue with Swamiji's life-his greatness or to be more correct the greatness of his inner-Self will shine with a glory of its own in his 57th year of life. And mankind will begin to benefit spiritually so much that this one Soul of souls will shed his lustre on one and all and bring into the fold of the Lord his prodigal sons by the magic of his soul-stirring MESSAGE of LOVE which in its broader form is an expression of the Divine. The Venus in Swamiji has been converted into great mental power and is the secret of his everlasting youth and that unforgettable love-inspiring LOOK in his eyes—a look which at once touches your heart cords, draws you nearer to the Great Soul, your worry vanishes and you feel at full harmony with the world that exists within you and without.



GENERAL BOOK OPINIONS :

Sri Swami Ganeshananda Bharati, Agstyamuni-Himalayas

I am very proud to write to you that your book: 'THE PRIMAL POWER IN MAN OR THE KUNDALINI SHAKTI' is a rare boon to the world. I had already great regard for you as a great man, a Sage of Illumination or Self-realization, but I had no idea that your Holiness had so keenly and minutely watched and explained the most difficult subject in a very clear, simple, lucid language and most scientifically.

Since last thirty years as a monk, I had gone through many books dealing with Kundalini Shakti by various authors but no one has explained it as you have done. Your work is a great asset not only to Coorg (birth-place) but to India and the whole world also. I can emphatically say that your Holiness is born to fulfill this GREAT WORK or MESSAGE.

I am highly benefitted by this book. I had lots of doubts before reading this book and all of them have been fully cleared and I am now working along the proper lines.

—:o:—

Mrs. Ingrid Kelly—Victoria—Australia.

Your book : 'KUNDALINI SHAKTI' arrived shortly. I appreciate your wonderful words. When I finished reading the books for the first time (I am reading it again) I was struck by the grand simplicity of the main idea. Western Psychology is still losing itself in complications which defeats Unity and a true conclusion. Your expositions on the other hand never leave the main theme on which the book is built and enables one to grasp the significance of the subject. The chapter on the partial rising of the Kundalini Shakti and Its Currents was of particular interest to me, as I found the explanation of the various currents, flashes of light and electrical shocks which I have felt at various times.

'Chetana' Bombay, on : "Mind, Its Source & Culture"

SWAMI NARAYANANANDA is already very well known through his various works. He is a realised soul who has taken upon himself the sacred mission of reforming and enlightening the common people and showing them the path of spiritual regeneration and true peace.

In the present work the revered Swami makes a strong plea for mind-control and deplores the utter lack of higher values in our educational system. He deals with the multifarious mind-functions in a scientific manner and throws light on the hidden powers of mind. "One can never dream of happiness here or hereafter without mind-control", says the author. He emphasizes the absolute necessity of Brahmacharya for all higher development and explains how a Brahmachari can awaken and direct his Kundalini Shakti for his spiritual uplift.

The book is a practical treatise of inestimable value to those interested in self-improvement and self-discipline. One of its object is to educate the educators of India, if they are prepared to learn. ———

Sri Hashmat Rai—Bareilly (India)

I happened to see your book on Kundalini Shakti recently and practised it. I had read Swami Sivananda, Sir John Woodruff, V. G. Rele and other five books in English and some in Hindi on this subject—but none was so comprehensive, practical and satisfying as your book. The language is very simple and is free from technical words. The practises and Sadhanas given therein are easy to follow. Your book is much superior to any other book on this subject.

Master Pieces on Yoga, Vedanta, Mind-Control & Brahmacharya

By: Swami Narayananda, Rishikesh-HIMALAYAS-INDIA

The following books are original works being the products of a Master-Mind. These wonderful books solve the riddle of life here and hereafter and help you in leading a Pure, Full, Happy and Healthy life.

These books throw full light on a variety of subjects and they have reached to different parts of the world and have helped great research scholars, Yoga-students and spiritual aspirants of the East and the West beyond their expectation. Leading papers and magazines have paid glorious tributes to all these books. The books are purely non-sectarian, absolutely practical and they embrace all creeds and both the sexes.

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[*2nd Revised Edition*]

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This book 'THE SECRETS OF MIND-CONTROL' is a master-piece on the subject. It is a very remarkable, reliable and authentic guide to the subject, being the personal experiences, hard labour and sincere researches made for 40 years by one of the greatest Sages of Modern India. The book deals with the various aspects of mind-control in 20—chapters and lays down methods to be adopted by different individuals as per their taste, tendency and inner growth.

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This book deals with the ins and outs of Brahmacharya (celibacy) and Reveals how by three-fold celibacy (in thought, word and deed) one can attain Peace, Power, Long Life, and Bliss. The chapters on immorality, the aim of married life, the place of women in social life, rules of Brahmacharya for householders, will be an eye-opener for many. There are practical suggestions to avoid dangers and avert pitfalls.

3. The Primal Power in Man or The Kundalini Shakti *[2nd Revised Edition]*

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This book 'THE PRIMAL POWER IN MAN OR THE KUNDALINI SHAKTI' is a Master piece on Yoga, written in a lucid, arresting, and highly informative way. The full-blown Yogi reveals secrets of life and offers advice which, if followed intelligently, must lead many towards man's ultimate goal of perfection of Body, Mind and Spirit. The author has expressed profound knowledge with simple clarity and sincerity of purpose, which is most acceptable to scientific mind.

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[2nd Enlarged & Revised Edition]

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This book : 'THE MYSTERIES OF MAN, MIND AND MIND-FUNCTIONS' is a very remarkable and comprehensive treatise of a difficult and at the same time most vital subject. A study of this most wonderful book will reveal that the author bases his extraordinarily elaborate arguments on sound reasoning, vast learning and deep experience. This book is an original work and a substantial new contribution to Psychology—being the researches made by a full-blown Yogi, who has dedicated a long life of 40 years after self-discipline, practice of Yoga, mind-control and thus coming face to face with Reality. The book is of absorbing interest and opens out realms not explored by modern Psychology.

7. The Gist of Religions

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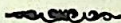
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9. Mind Its Source & Culture

Cr. 8 V.O. Pp. 154—Hard Board & Jacket

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This book is another master-piece from the pen of the Revered Sage. It deals with Mind, Its Origin, the multifarious mind-functions, the hidden powers of the mind, Emotion and real Education, etc., in a most lucid and convincing manner. Dealing with mind powers the author brings forward the absolute necessity of *Brahmacharya* (celibacy) for the higher developments of the mind, for its control and attainment of *Samadhi*. This point has been dealt with in a most scientific way, thereby refuting the charges made by some of the biologists and medical men against the observance of *Brahmacharya*. The last chapter explains the need of man making education and the changes that are to be made for the real peace, prosperity and evolution of human beings. A study of this book is sure to enlighten one and all as it throws light on most vital and intricate points.

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There are many books dealing with *Pranayama* and there is much confusion regarding the word "*Prana*". The word "*Prana*" has been very loosely used and many *Yoga*-students have been confused. The present booklet being based upon the personal experiences of the Revered Sage, throws ample light on the topic and explains the delicate subject in a most scientific way. Swamiji has divided *Pranayama* into two parts in the book: i *Pranayama* for Gaining Health and Happiness, & ii. *Pranayama* for higher spiritual attainments. It also deals with selected *Yoga - Asanas* (along with illustrations) for the daily use of a modern man or woman. Any man or woman, married or single, strictly following the instructions can derive immense benefit and thus help in building a true, happy and healthy life which is a growing necessity of this nuclear age.

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This book is the outcome of the Rev. Sage's researches made in the realm of mind and Spirit for the last forty years. When the top-leading statesmen of the world are struggling hard to establish peace in the world, this book comes to us at the most opportune time as a God-sent thing. The Sage proves beyond doubt the existence of one God-man's relation with that Supreme Being-and how a Universal Religion can be established without the least friction with any of the existing Religions of the world. Dealing with mind, the cause of a thought, thought-functions and cognition, the author is most original. The book proves beyond any doubt that mind is everything and it is written in a simple, lucid language and is of absorbing interest



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This brochure deals with the subject in a masterly way-and it is a rare boon to all those intellectuals who have revolted against Religion. Whatever may be the future attainments in Science, this small booklet will face the acid test of it.



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BOOK-OPINION

Your books are excellent and seemingly first hand information from experience and expressed in the shortest direct form. I admire this very much. This is contrary to most or nearly all books to my knowledge dealing with the subjects you cover in your books on the American-market to day which go around and around under sign, symbol, hieroglyph or enigma and when you get through you are left still very much in mid air more puzzled than you ever were before.

Professor W. F. Rosenberg,
SAN ANTONIO. (U.S.A.)



The theory of 'Ojas Shakti' sketched by Swami Narayanananda is surely relevant to a paper emphasising the connection between sexual-energy and higher psychic states that Dr. Hereward Carrington read at an International Congress that met some years ago at Copenhagen. It also invites comparison with the theory of mental 'homeostasis' put forward by the analyst Samuel Lowy. Lowy suggests that following successful repression in one field (say aggression or sexuality) there is an increase of productive potentiality in other spheres. Swami Narayanananda's book is a pointer to the vast fields which have yet to be ploughed.

THE MYSTERIES OF MAN, MIND AND MIND-FUNCTIONS

[2nd Revised Edition]

(By: *Swami Narayananda*)

REVIEW BY: 'HINDU' Madras, (INDIA).

The widespread demand in the world to-day for more information about the theory and the practice of Raja-Yoga has not been met by all the books on the subject that have come tumbling into our laps. What makes Swami Narayananda's book a valuable addition to the literature is the attempt to disclose the relevant experiences behind a difficult terminology by somebody who has been treading the path of Yogic discipline for the last twenty-five years. Accepting the traditional scheme of classifying experiences into Jagrata ('waking-state'), Svapna (dream-state'), Su-shupti ('dreamless sleep-state') and Turiya (transcendental-state'), the author works in many fine details about unconscious and subconscious states. Various modifications of the 'mind-stuff' or Chitta are described and practical suggestions for averting undesirable thoughts and emotions are thrown out. The theory of Kundalini Shakti expounded by the author in his previous volumes is made pivotal to the discussion. Even a partial ascent of the Kundalini into the 'head-centre' is said to bring with it inspiration in such domains as art and literature. Inspiration, however, stops short of intuition or Emancipation which is here described as the complete ascent of the Kundalini. [P. T. Back]

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